

WITH PRESENTATION PLATE: "HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V."—BY JOHN ST. HELIER LANDER, R.O.I.

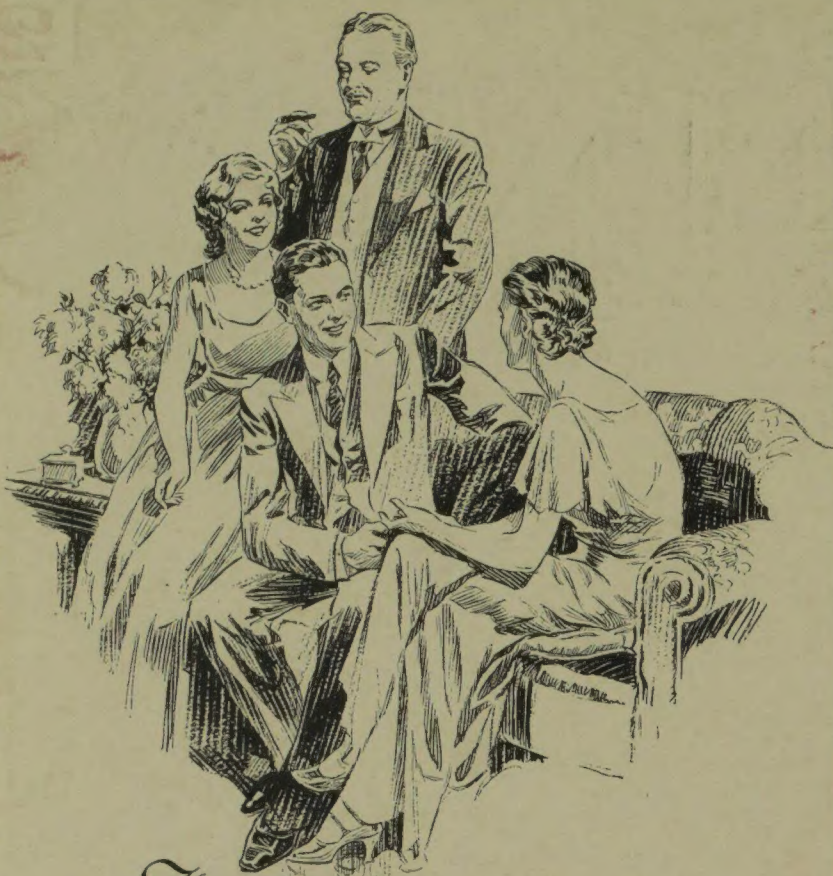
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THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

CHRISTMAS 1934 NUMBER





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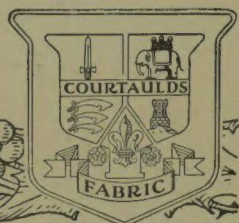
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HIS MAJESTY.

After the Painting of His Majesty King George V. by JOHN ST. HELIER LANDER, R.O.I.

EXHIBITED AT THE PARIS SALON, 1934.

The Illustrated London News Christmas Number

1934

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THE CHRISTMAS CAROL. By W. E. WEBSTER. A Frontispiece in Colours.

"DELPHINE IS SAVED BY AN UNKNOWN WOMAN." A Full Page in Colours by GORDON NICOLL. An illustration to "The Three Escapes of Delphine de Custine," a story of the French Revolution by Carola Oman.

THE THREE ESCAPES OF DELPHINE DE CUSTINE. A Story by CAROLA OMAN, Author of "Crouchback," "Major Grant," etc. Profusely Illustrated in Colour and in Monochrome by GORDON NICOLL.

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TOYS OF YESTERDAY and TOYS OF TO-DAY. Two Contrasting Pages in Colours.

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CHRISTMAS IS A HEAVY TIME FOR POSTMEN. A Short Story by EARDLEY BESWICK. With Illustrations by W. R. STOTT.

NOTE.—All the characters in the stories in this number are imaginary.

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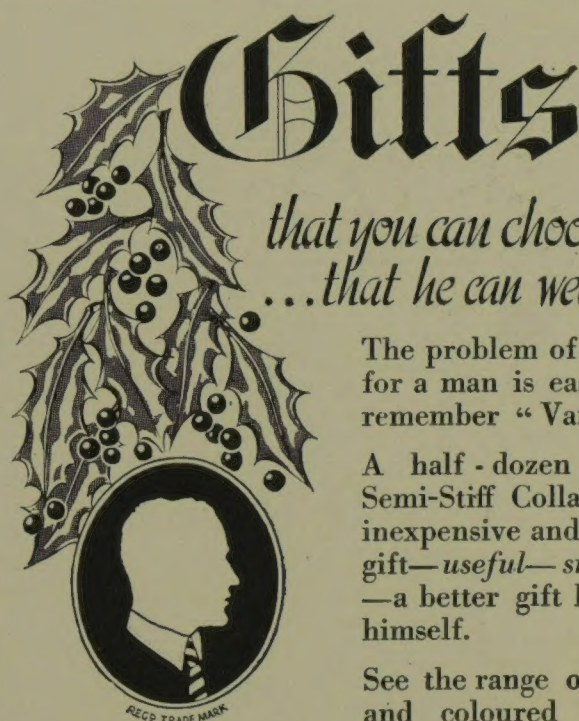


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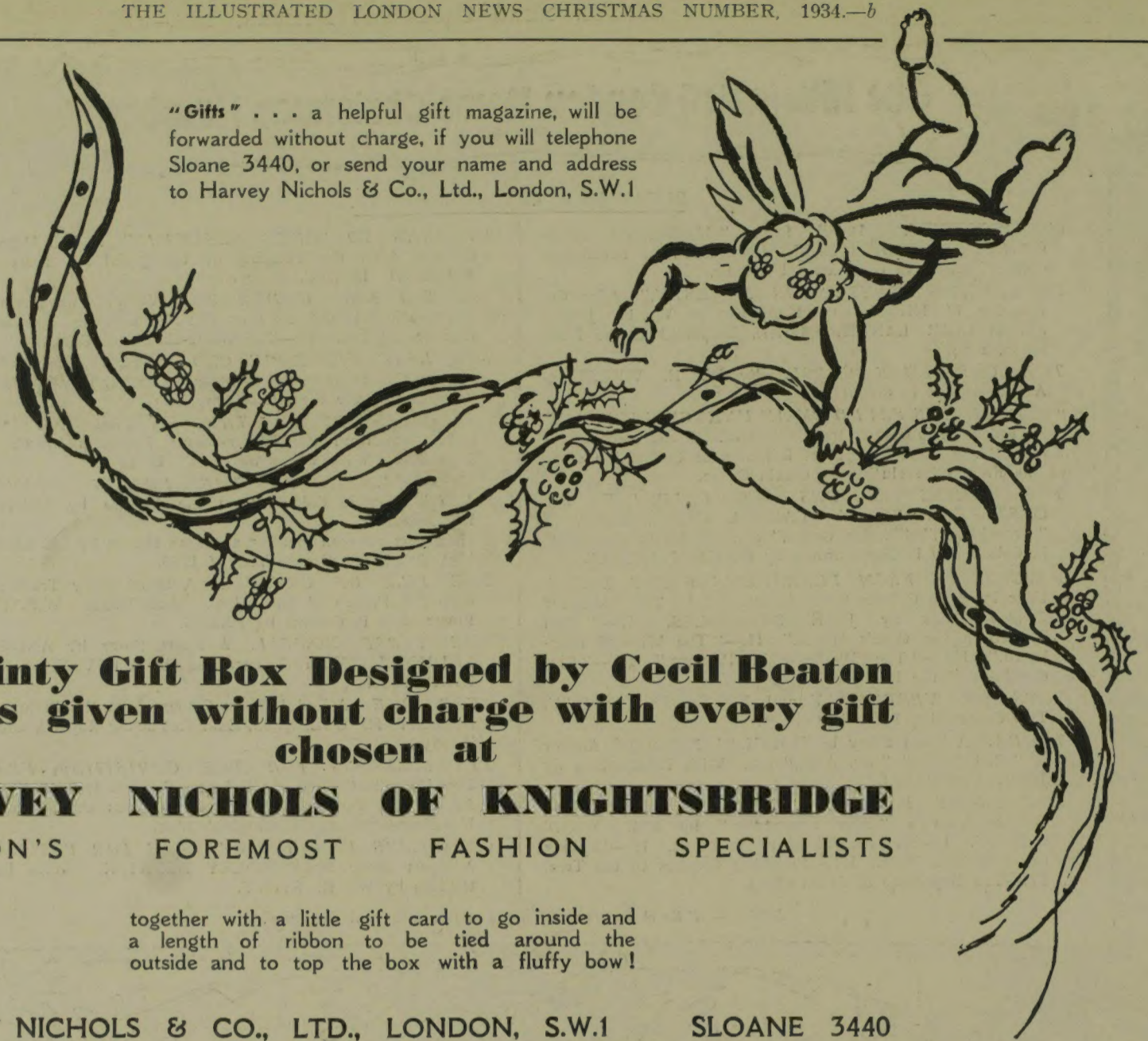
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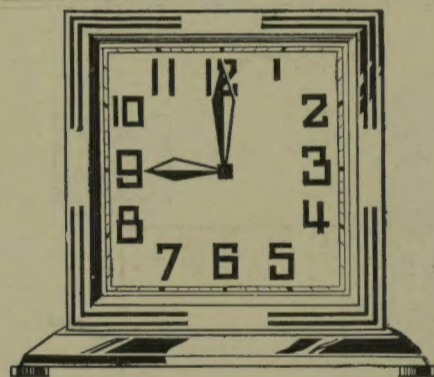
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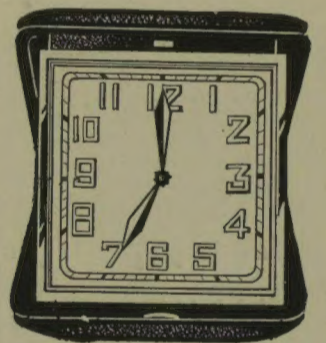
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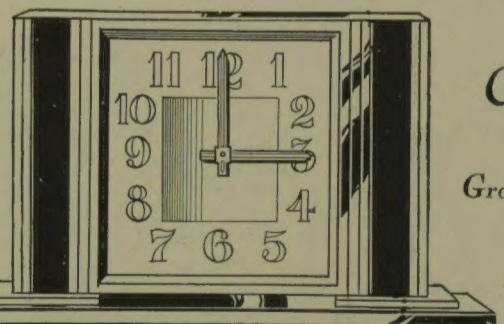


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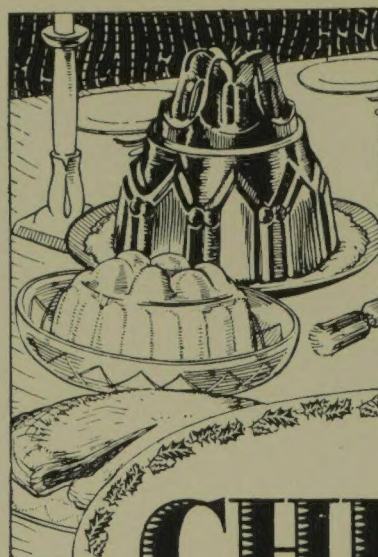
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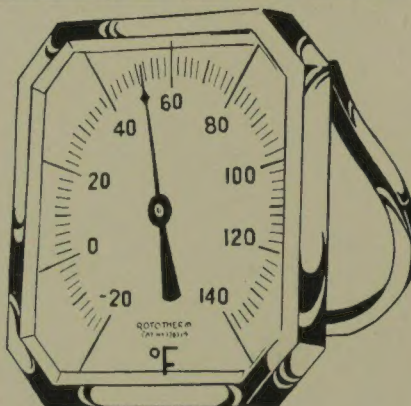
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H.R.H. The Prince of Wales recently said:

"I do commend this Institution to the Public for their continued assistance, and I would remind them that it is supported by voluntary contributions."

THE SHAFTESBURY HOMES AND "ARETHUSA" TRAINING SHIP

have just admitted the
30,000th Child

THIS IS A SPLENDID RECORD OF GOOD WORK

Every child who enters the Society's Homes or the Training Ship "Arethusa" is fed, clothed and educated, and trained so that he or she becomes not only a good, but useful man or woman

FUNDS ARE MOST URGENTLY NEEDED NOW

1,100 children are always being maintained

PLEASE MAKE A COLLECTION ON CHRISTMAS DAY to help the Society in their Great Work

DONATIONS WILL BE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED
from

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President: H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES, K.G.

CHRISTMAS KINDNESS—PROVIDING FOR YOUNG AND OLD.

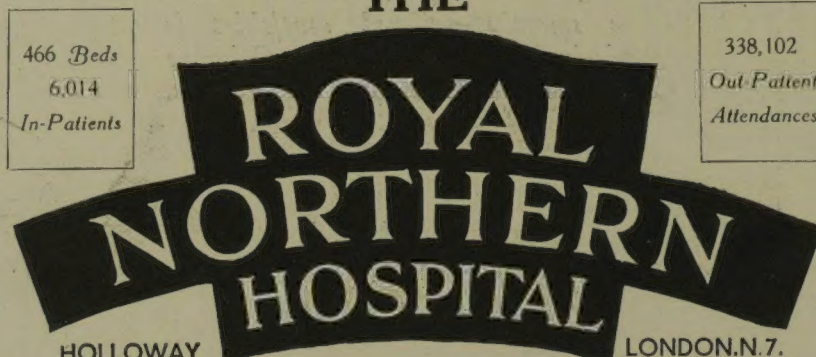
WITH the Christmas spirit in the air, it is well that people should not only remember their friends and their relations, but should think also of the poorer and less fortunate.

The first name on the list of charities which solicit the benevolence of our readers is Dr. Barnardo's Homes. "No destitute child ever refused admission" is a proud claim to maintain, even for an organisation as widely and justly renowned as Dr. Barnardo's Homes. But it has proved true to 116,000 children in the past, and it is unthinkable that it should not prove true to as many again, and many more, in the future, just as long as there is want and necessity to be relieved. Last year alone, 1806 entered the Homes, and at the present moment there are 8500 boys and girls and babies being cared for within its sheltering doors, and of these, more than a thousand are under five years of age. They have all to be clothed and fed and trained, so that they may grow up with a fair chance of playing their part as worthy citizens of the Empire. Dr. Barnardo's Homes give these children their chance in life, and in order that they may continue to do so, our readers, in their turn, are asked to give what help they can. The need is very great, and all subscriptions, however small, will be welcomed thankfully. They should be addressed to the Rt. Hon. Lord Ebbisham, G.B.E. (Honorary Treasurer), 18-26, Stepney Causeway, London, E.1.

But what of the 4500 young people in the care of the Waifs and Strays Society? The fulfilment of their Christmas hopes is a matter for real concern to the Society in these days. To be father and mother to a family of 4500 is no easy task, and the Society's income permits only of bare necessities. Yet outside its doors there are so many children to whom even these are denied. Will you think of these children?—and especially of those still left outside the Homes, and in urgent need of the help which you can enable the Society to extend to a little sufferer by sending a donation, however small, to the Secretary, Waifs and Strays Society, Old Town Hall, Kennington, S.E.11.

Many a poor family will have to make its Christmas dinner off a couple of herrings or their equivalent unless a "miracle" happens—unless the carrier dumps down a hamper loaded with good Christmas fare from you. A ten-shilling parcel contains fourteen-shillingsworth of Christmas goods, including a packet of tea! The wonderful Church Army organisation makes this possible. Church Army department workers lead busy lives for a month before Christmas, going through their files and selecting the most deserving people to participate in this benefit. Gifts for Church Army Christmas Work will be welcomed by Preb. Carlile, C.H., D.D., 55, Bryanston Street, London, W.1.

**THIS
CHRISTMASTIDE
PLEASE REMEMBER
THE**



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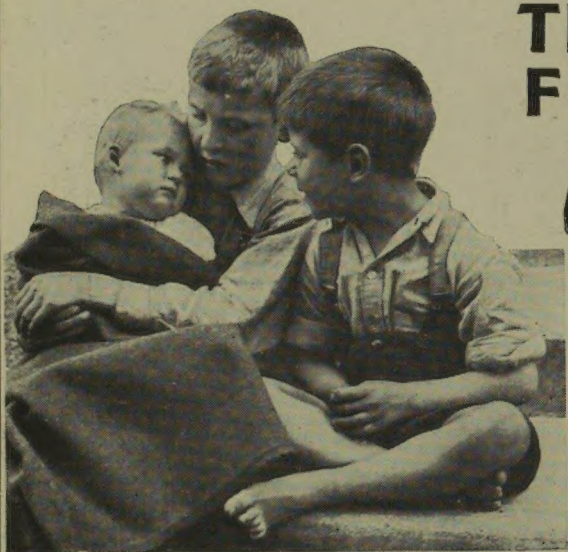
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CHILDREN ON
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**WAIFS & STRAYS
SOCIETY**

But alas! childhood has other experiences besides the delights of Christmas. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children exists to *prevent* cruelty. It does not exist primarily to punish parents or others who are cruel to children. When other methods fail, it does not hesitate to take cases into court; but the real work of the Society is done by its inspectors in their visits to the homes of the people. Last year there were 108,198 little ones saved from brutality and neglect. Readers having sympathy with this work who would like to help suffering children should send their gifts to the Hon. Treasurer, Sir G. Wyatt Truscott, Bt., The N.S.P.C.C., Victory House, Leicester Square, London, W.C.2.

The work of the Shaftesbury Homes and *Arethusa* Training Ship has met with great success during the past year, many boys and girls having been successful in examinations and in promotion in their various spheres of work. Unfortunately, despite the splendid work being carried on, at the moment there are accounts amounting to £7000 still to be paid. (This in addition to the £7000 outstanding on the new *Arethusa*.) The Homes exist to help the fatherless or those in distress, but, like everything else, this cannot be done without money. The Society therefore pleads for new helpers, in order that this great work for children may be carried on to its utmost capacity.

Let us now turn to the work of the Royal Northern Hospital, in Holloway Road. Here is a hospital built to serve the urgent needs of people living in an area of seventy square miles. People of substantial means do not live in this rather unattractive part of North London, and this hospital is supported in the main by the willing, but necessarily tiny, contributions of the poor people in this area. They do not realise that there is a constant danger of wards in the hospital being closed for lack of funds. To prevent this grim eventuality materialising, we ask readers to send what they can to The Secretary, Royal Northern Hospital, Holloway, N.7.

Another institution that does very fine work is the Cancer Hospital. Moreover, research and experimental work are here carried on continuously by men of brilliant brains, using the finest and most delicate instruments. The maintenance of this fine hospital and its costly X-ray and radiological department requires the constant support of the charitable. Will readers help by directing a little of their Christmas cheer to the Cancer Hospital, Fulham Road?

But to return to the able-bodied. Disciplined, healthy, and intelligent men leave the Army, Navy, and Air Force annually to return to civil life. All those of good character are interviewed and registered at a branch of the Regular Forces Employment Association. Any employer of labour requiring one, or a thousand, men, either skilled or unskilled, has merely to state his requirements at the nearest branch—which will be found in the telephone directory.



BUT there is a greater tragedy for a little child than the loss of Christmas joys—the deprivation of health and happiness. This is happening in many tens of thousands of little lives each year.

THE N.S.P.C.C

through its 263 "Children's Men" is saving, on an average, **FOUR** children every **FIVE** minutes, from brutality and neglect. The Society pleads for your help at this time.

Please send a Christmas Donation

to the Hon. Treasurer, Sir G. Wyatt Truscott, Bt., or to Wm. J. Elliott, Director, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Victory House, Leicester Square, London, W.C.2. (Chairman: The Viscount Ullswater, G.C.B.)



...the Joy and Good Cheer of Christmas.

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THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

CHRISTMAS NUMBER 1934



THE CHRISTMAS CAROL.

By WALTER E. WEBSTER.

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DELPHINE IS SAVED BY AN UNKNOWN WOMAN IN THE CROWD, FINDING PROTECTION IN CARRYING A FISHWIFE'S BABY.

"She remembered that these were the people who had torn the *Princesse de Lamballe* limb from limb. . . . Suddenly her swimming gaze fell upon a debased-looking fishwife dandling an infant. With her most sweetly-silly smile, Delphine exclaimed irrepressibly: 'Oh, what a nice baby!' The woman's face twitched with some emotion. A second later, whispering roughly: 'Take it!' she had bundled her child into Delphine's arms."

FROM THE PAINTING BY GORDON NICOLL, R.I., ILLUSTRATING "THE THREE ESCAPES OF DELPHINE DE CUSTINE." (SEE OPPOSITE PAGE.)



When the General's trial came on, his beautiful daughter-in-law sat on a stool at his feet . . . Jacques-René Hébert snarled warningly at the members of the Tribunal: "The beaux yeux of Citizeness Custine are seducing you all!"

The Three Escapes of Delphine de Custine.

By CAROLA OMAN.

Author of "Crouchback," "Major Grant," etc.

Illustrated by GORDON NICOLL, R.I.

ON the last day of July, in the year 1787, wedding bells were ringing in the little village of Anizy-le-Château, in Picardy. The bride was sixteen, golden-haired, a "Queen of the Roses"; the bridegroom, nearly nineteen, a shy and studious boy. The match was one which pleased everybody. Mlle. Louise-Eléanore-Mélanie de Sabran, always known by her friends as "Delphine," had no father, no sisters, and a pretty fortune; Armand-Louis-Philippe-François, heir of the Field-Marshal Comte de Custine, had no brothers, no mother. The young people were very infantile, quite laughably scared of one another; besides, poor Armand was really suffering. Last night, intense nervousness had brought on appalling toothache. At an early hour this morning, an unskilful barber-surgeon had removed the bridegroom's aching tooth, but also a piece of his jaw.

The good Bishop of Laon, the largest town in the neighbourhood, happened to be the bride's cousin, but, as he was of quite another generation, she always addressed him respectfully as "uncle." Monseigneur de Sabran was a great man, and a man of the great world. He was one of the King's Almoners, and the de Sabrans ranked as about the seventh oldest family in France. One de Sabran had been to the First Crusade; another had been a saint. It was claimed that every royal house in Europe was descended from a de Sabran. Delphine herself had been named after an ancestress renowned in the fourteenth century for her piety and beauty.

Anizy was the Bishop's summer palace, and at one hour after noon he married the young couple in his private chapel. Delphine did not cry at her wedding. When the moment came for her mother to leave her kneeling alone on a *prie-dieu*, when she had to utter the famous "Yes" which cannot be unsaid, her little face only grew a trifle long, her blue eyes rather larger than usual. Her mother, who had herself been married to a man of sixty-nine while she was in her teens, wept throughout the service. She had chosen and thoroughly approved of her daughter's husband, she knew that Delphine's chance of happiness was far greater than hers had been, yet she could not help feeling that some dreadful fate was awaiting these charming children.

And, indeed, it seemed a children's party altogether, for the boy bridegroom had never looked less sure of himself, and the bride's young brother, whose duty it was to hold up a canopy over his sister's head, proved to be too small to do so until he had been mounted on one of the chapel seats. His mother thought he looked like one of the angels in a picture of the Annunciation of the Virgin.

It was a beautiful day, and after the wedding breakfast the whole company of guests went down into the gardens of the Château. Here a troop of shepherds and shepherdesses, headed by the bailiff, was waiting to offer compliments to the young couple. The village carpenter leapt upon a chair, and sang a song of his own composition, four pages long and full of comical mistakes—one feared it would never end. Afterwards, everyone danced on the grass to the music made by a village orchestra, "quite informally, like simple people," writes the bride's mother. Nothing could have been more fashionable. The Pastoral was the latest whim of this over-ripe, luxurious age, forerunner of revolution and social

catastrophe. With heedless vivacity and artificial grace, the guests at Delphine de Custine's wedding, attired in pale silks and brocades, powder and patches, postured and played on the shaven lawns of Anizy throughout a long summer's day. And when they were too fatigued to dance any more, the gentlemen present made a bank and played *pharaon*, to amuse the ladies. With dusk, "the Bishop gave a splendid feast, with his usual magnificence."

The bride's mother, the widowed Comtesse de Sabran, was a gay and elegant *Parisienne*. She was still a beauty. "Though I can no longer pretend to adorn a fête, I need not disfigure it," said she coquettishly. She found the bridegroom's father, "Old General Moustache," as his troops called him, a terrible trial—"a scourge sent from Heaven." His manners were so abrupt; he had been so tiresome about the marriage settlement. In the end, she had been obliged to send her great friends, the Duc and Duchesse de Polignac (who were also the Queen's great friends), to threaten to break off the match unless he would be more reasonable. On the day that the contract was irrevocably signed at Versailles, Mme. de Sabran took her little daughter for a picnic, "alone in the park of Meudon." They sat and ate a cold collation, in a green shade, by the side of a spring, as happy as birds in the fresh air and freedom. It was just the kind of scene that Court painters loved to depict on a chicken-skin fan, or encrusted with brilliants, in enamels, on the lid of a bon-bon box.

So Delphine became Mme. de Custine, at sixteen, with a young husband ready to adore her. It was quite amusing to see how she queened it over Armand. Almost at once she made a delicious discovery. She had only to smile at her grave little bridegroom, and he would do anything she asked! Presently, she was to find that most gentlemen were the same when Delphine de Custine smiled, but that time had not yet come. For the first months after their wedding Delphine and Armand were blissfully happy.

They made an expedition into the Vosges Mountains. One morning they set out at one o'clock, by moonlight, under a sky powdered with stars, and climbed up through the whispering pine forests, past innumerable waterfalls, high above the roofs of all the sleeping chalets of St. Moritz, up, up on to the top of the world, to watch the sun rise on Mont Blanc. Mme. de Sabran felt the dawn wind chilly as they waited to see the distant snow-peaks flushed with rose colour that August morning, but Delphine and Armand, sitting apart, cheek to cheek, seemed as warm and rosy as the sun himself, when his rays touched their wondering, up-turned faces. Afterwards, realising that they were frightfully hungry, they went and asked for breakfast from a hospitable peasant. Outside his doors they sat on wooden benches feasting on fresh milk, bread, and cheese.

Altogether, the honeymoon was the greatest success, but at the end of it Delphine came to her mother looking solemn. She had now been married twelve weeks, and she had been reading in certain old chronicles that when queens wanted an heir they went to the shrine of Notre-Dame-de-Liesse, and hung a gold or silver heart round the neck of the statue of the miraculous Virgin there. And you must not go comfortably. You had to go like real pilgrims, whatever the weather.



Armand was to dress up as Delphine, and Delphine as Louise. . . . On the night before that fixed for Armand's flight, they had a dress-rehearsal in his cell.

On a November morning an odd-looking party set out on foot for Liesse: mother-in-law, bride and bridegroom, the bride's little brother, a tutor, a footman, a maid, and, finally, a donkey with everyone's luggage strapped on its patient back. Ten months later, guns audible for more than two leagues around announced to the tenants of "General Moustache" that an heir had been born at the Château. A hundred and fifty peasants came in procession to the christening. In spite of his violent temper, the democratic General was extremely popular, except amongst his own class. On his estate at Nidervillers he had founded a porcelain factory, so as to give the villagers employment. There was so much grumbling amongst the lower classes in France of these days. It was almost as if a thunderstorm was rolling up, with a sound like distant drums.

Next summer that storm broke. The day of the Court Pastoral, exemplified by Delphine de Custine's country wedding, by the Queen of France's mock village of Petit Trianon, where Court ladies dressed as shepherdesses in muslin gowns and pastel-coloured ribbons, was gone. The day of the scarlet bonnet was come, the day of *Liberté, Égalité, and Fraternité*. And poor "General Moustache," like many who have deemed themselves red revolutionaries, soon found that his opinions were considered the palest shade of pink by those now in power. For four years more he struggled to go on serving in the Army against the foreign invaders of his country, but when he heard that his own countrymen had executed his King, he said what he thought. His words were repeated; he was recalled to Paris, arrested, and flung into prison.

As he sat one afternoon, awaiting his trial, looking out of his barred window on to the cobblestones below, where the female prisoners, tapping about in their high-heeled shoes, were washing out their soiled gowns in the small fountain that decorated the courtyard of the Conciergerie, the door of his cell opened to admit a brilliant vision, a most surprising guest—his little daughter-in-law.

Delphine had not made a model wife to the General's adored only son. During these trying years she had hardened into an exquisitely beautiful, exquisitely frivolous creature, quite a favourite of the fashionable world, while Armand had become prematurely grave and stiff. They had drifted apart, and the births of two children, and the sudden, heartrending loss of one, had failed to bring them together again. The admirers who pleased "La Belle Custine" (as she was now called) most, were those who dressed best and had fewest brains. She admitted as much. Mme. de Sabran, who had fled to Germany months ago, listened with growing anxiety for news of her daughter's latest follies and frivolities.

But Delphine was not yet—never would be—cold-hearted. She had been safely down in Normandy with her surviving child; little Astolphe was delicate, but no sooner did she hear of her father-in-law's danger than some loyalty impelled her to return to her husband. Armand was placarding Paris with appeals to the people not to let old "General Moustache," their best friend, be destroyed. The unfortunate result of these efforts was that, a few days after Delphine arrived to join him, Armand, too, was arrested.

To this day some people seem to imagine that, during the French Revolution, Paris was filled by a never-ceasing flood of *tricoteuses* and *apaches*, charging about the streets at the gallop, carrying heads and tresses of hair upon the ends of pikes, and seeking for *aristos* to rend in pieces. This was not quite the case, as the time that elapsed between the destruction of the Bastille and the Abolition of the Revolutionary Tribunal was five years and five months; the most athletic mob must have got exhausted. The truth was that, if you dressed and behaved discreetly, you could walk about most parts of Paris at most hours at the date when Delphine de Custine returned there. The real terrors to be feared (none the less terrifying because they existed where there was still a semblance of ordinary life) were arrest—the thundering knock on your door, often at dead of night, which meant that some enemy had denounced you—and the accidental infuriation of any large crowd. Delphine de Custine was to experience both of these terrors.

The de Custines' Paris house was in the Rue de Bourbon, and every morning, sometimes as early as six o'clock, she began her visits to her two prisoners. Armand was in the prison of La Force, his father in the Conciergerie. Delphine wore her long, curling hair unpowdered, and a plain muslin gown with a fichu. In this simple dress she looked even lovelier than when attired in powder and brocade, for everyone who knew her agrees that her beauty was of a flower-like description. One writer compares her to a brilliant narcissus; another to a half-opened rose. An old friend of her family, M. Guy de Chaumont-Quitry, escorted her through the streets. He dressed as a man of the people, in a red cap of Liberty and the kind of loose jacket called a *carmagnole*.

When the General's trial came on, his beautiful daughter-in-law sat on a stool at his feet throughout the proceedings. The noble veteran and the fair girl made so touching a picture that Jacques-René Hébert, the atrocious accuser of Marie-Antoinette, snarled warningly at the members of the Tribunal: "The *beaux yeux* of Citizeness Custine are seducing you all!" Antoine-Quentin Fouquier-Tinville, calling himself "Minister of Public Justice," feared an acquittal. He sent a message to the Guard who kept the doors. Now these men were the paid assassins of the September Massacres, and his message was to say that if the mob appeared exasperated at the sight of the elegant Citizeness Custine leaving the building to-day, no one need injure himself attempting to protect her.

So, when Delphine came to the head of the long flight of steps leading from the Palais de Justice into the square below, she heard a sound, and saw enough, to make her raise her hand to her mouth and bite her fingers till they bled. There was always a rabble waiting here to jeer at the prisoners being brought to trial. To-day, armed with staves and swords, they were breaking through the so-called Guard. At the first sight of her slight figure, a scream went up: "It is the Custine! The daughter of the traitor!" Timid as a fawn, she glanced around her, daring neither to advance nor retreat. Not a single friend stepped forwards, and she had always been frightened of crowds. She remembered that these were the people who had torn the Princesse de Lamballe limb from limb. That poor lady had lost her footing. "If I slip, as she did, it is all over with me," thought Delphine. Suddenly her swimming gaze fell upon a debased-looking fishwife dandling an infant. With her most sweetly-silly smile, Delphine exclaimed irrepressibly: "Oh, what a nice baby!"

The woman's face twitched with some emotion. A second later, whispering roughly: "Take it! Quick!" she had bundled her child into Delphine's arms. Carrying it carefully, and seeming to be absorbed in peering into its little face, Delphine began to make her way through the threatening crowd. Although the furies surged around her like beasts of prey, nobody wished to be the first to strike down a woman carrying an innocent child of the people. She reached her waiting cab unmolested, and at the head of the *Pont-Neuf* gave the infant back to its mother. Neither woman said anything. Such was the first escape of Delphine de Custine.

For her father-in-law there was no escape. When Delphine arrived at the prison the next morning she found that he had been moved into a much better cell. But the General had only got improved quarters because the authorities wanted the worst in the place for a more hated prisoner—the Queen. The night before his execution the General wrote to Armand that he was a little nervous lest he should not behave suitably when he reached the guillotine. He thought that he would not fail in courage, but one could never be sure. He need not have worried. Adam-Philippe, Comte de Custine, met his end with exemplary calm. But it is told that there were tears in the old patriot's eyes as he drove to the scaffold. The People, for whose sake he had got himself detested by his fellow aristocrats, had failed him.



They stared at one another and burst out laughing. Such an old man to wear rouge! Ha! ha! How funny that was! Delphine began to shriek too. Jailers, recognising hysterics, rushed in and carried her away.

The unhappy Queen occupied his cell for forty nights, then she was moved to another, then to another. On an October day she was done to death, but she had said over two months ago: "Nothing can hurt me any more." She had really died in the hour that her little son had been dragged whimpering from her, and consigned to the keeping of Simon, the cobbler. As she passed to the guillotine, a young Republican artist did a dreadful little sketch of the Queen of France. Her back was still straight, but her shoulders sagged, her lips turned down in a broken line like those of an old woman, her wispy hair, under a coarse cap, was snow-white. And she was not yet eight-and-thirty. That young Republican lived to become First Painter to the Emperor Napoleon I. He lived to cover acres of canvas with glossy Court portraits. Nobody knew better than M. David how to depict bullion on white satin, or golden bees, embroidered on trains of green velvet. . . .

Delphine de Custine had known her Queen well. Once, when Delphine and her brother had been mere children, they had acted in a play at Versailles, and Marie-Antoinette had been so charmed by the precocious little creatures that, after the performance was over, she had insisted that she and her husband must wait upon them at supper. King Louis and his Queen had stood behind the chairs of Delphine and Elzéar de Sabran and plied them with sweetmeats. It had all been so unsuitable, so typical of Marie-Antoinette. . . . And now she had been guillotined, and Delphine's husband was waiting for the same fate.

Delphine had made friends with the daughter of the *conciierge* who let relatives in and out at a certain gate of Armand's prison. Louise was the name of this pretty girl, and for a large bribe, after some hesitation, she had agreed to lend Delphine a bundle of her clothes and take part in a little plot. Armand was to dress up as Delphine, and Delphine as Louise. At twilight on a January night, one might always hope that visitors would not be too closely scrutinised. And Armand was fair and slight. M. de Chaumont-Quitry would be waiting for them at the street corner with a carriage, and the thirty thousand francs promised to Louise, who was to slip out by a back entrance to receive her reward. The two girls began to make a habit of leaving the prison chattering together. Nobody ever stopped them. On the night before that fixed for Armand's flight, they had a dress-rehearsal in his cell, and everything went perfectly. Delphine kissed her husband "good-bye" full of hopes for to-morrow.

But that very night the Tribunal passed a new order. Anyone convicted of helping a prisoner to escape was to be punished by death. When Delphine arrived the next afternoon she found Louise in tears. The brave girl had spent all the morning trying to persuade Monsieur, but nothing would induce him now to continue with a scheme which would involve two women in disaster. Armand might be fair and slight, but he was a man. A copy of the newspaper containing the fatal decree had been put into his cell. He had never in his life refused to do anything that Delphine asked, but this evening she did not trust her own entreaties alone. She begged Louise to go into the cell with her. Her fears were justified. Armand, though looking dreadfully ill, was obdurate. In vain his wife told him that if he died, their child would be an orphan, for she would die too. He replied that she was asking Louise to do more than her duty. Louise said: "Monsieur, save yourself!" What happened to her was her own affair. Delphine, who had been ready to sacrifice Louise as well as herself, said hastily that the good girl should hide and escape with them. Armand said despairingly that there was no hiding, no escape from this unhappy country. He thought that the *conciierge's* daughter could not know of the new order, and, picking up the paper, began to read it aloud to her; but Louise interrupted him. Falling on her knees, she told him that she had considered the danger. She did not even want her money now. All her happiness was bound up in this plan. She had fallen a victim, like many before and after her, to Delphine's beseeching smile.

This scene was so painful that only once in her life was Delphine known to describe it. It was brought to an end by the jailer arriving

to say that all visitors must leave the cells. Delphine had to be carried to her cab in a fainting condition. When she saw M. de Chaumont-Quitry's face she moaned: "All is lost! He will not save himself." The doomed man's friend answered: "I knew it!"

The young couple only met once more; Armand would not let his wife attend his trial. He was afraid lest her presence might unnerve him. But when sentence of death was passed upon him the next day, he was able to shrug his shoulders, quite master of himself. This was the correct pose for an *aristo*. Some people said that the *aristos* did no good by appearing so brave. To see them playing cards and dice, jesting and smiling, as they went to their deaths, only encouraged their tormentors. Ladies of low birth, like poor Mme. Dubarry, once a king's favourite, who had to be chased round the guillotine screeching like a hen with its neck half-wrung, moved even the brutal to feelings of pity. But Armand and Delphine were perfect types of their age and race.

Delphine bribed a jailer and got into La Force that night, to bid her husband farewell. It was nine o'clock when she arrived in the gloomy *parloir* of the prison, which was always at its most eerie after dark. Many of the turnkeys kept dogs, who stole about snuffing and whining. Sometimes the silence would be broken by the screams of a prisoner waking from a nightmare. One could guess too easily of what his dream had been. And it was bitterly cold. . . . Delphine and Armand did not have privacy for their last interview, for several cells

opened out of the *parloir* in which they had been allowed to meet, and at its end the figures of jailers could be seen behind a glass screen. A single candle standing on a table was their only light.

Delphine went quietly up to her husband and kissed him, without saying a word. They did not say much during the three hours that they sat there together, shivering, hand in hand. When she mentioned their baby, Astolphe, the young father begged her to desist. About midnight, feeling deadly faint, and remembering that he would need all his strength for to-morrow, she made a movement and rose as if to go. In the same moment a slight noise startled them. A little door which they had not hitherto noticed opened softly, and out of it came a man carrying a dark-lantern. He was a prisoner on his way to visit another. He cut an extraordinary figure, for he wore a dressing-jacket edged with swansdown, white breeches, and a cotton night-cap with an orange tassel. He slipped past them noiselessly, without raising his feet, moving in the gliding manner practised by courtiers at Versailles. As he passed the motionless pair standing by the table, he looked at them for a second, then went on his way without uttering.

While he was so near, the young couple noticed that this withered old courtier was heavily rouged. They did not reflect that he might be going to the guillotine

to-morrow, and have borrowed some colour so as to appear undaunted on a sharp, frosty morning. They stared at one another and burst out laughing. Such an old man to wear rouge! Ha! ha! How funny that was. They laughed and laughed. Delphine began to shriek too. Jailers, recognising hysterics, rushed in and carried her away. Her last dreadful sight of Armand showed him still convulsed with laughter.

Next afternoon he wrote her a farewell letter. It was not very well expressed, its style was boyish, but it was a love-letter. "I do not think," said Armand, "I have ever purposely done harm to anyone. . . ." He said that he hoped to see his poor Delphine again some day. He hoped that she would not let their son forget his father. She must remember to give a reward to the person who brought her this. . . . He was still writing when the warders came for him. Unlike his parent, Armand de Custine is said to have looked radiant as he passed to his death. The guillotine at that date looked towards the garden of the house in which he had first met his bride—the de Sabrans' Paris home.

The little widow, having nothing further to keep her in the capital, now decided to emigrate. She had moved to a modest flat in the Rue de Lille. A fellow-prisoner of her late husband, who had been surprisingly released from La Force, came to her aid. M. Bertrand

(Continued on page 13.)



Delphine de Custine was arrested. The maid who denounced her began to cry. "Oh, Madame, forgive me!"

Favourites from Perrault's Fairy Tales: Tom Thumb at the Ogre's House.

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"TOM THUMB CLIMBED A TREE, AND, LYING ON A BIG LEAF, DESCRIBED A LIGHT GLIMMERING FROM THE WINDOW OF A HOUSE."

TOM THUMB and his six brothers, children of a poor wood-cutter, were deserted in a forest by their parents, who had no money, and could not bear to see them die of starvation. As night fell, the boys were in despair. Tom Thumb climbed a tree, and, lying on a big leaf, descried a light glimmering from the window of a house. The woman who answered their knock told them it was the home of an ogre who devoured children, though she treated them kindly. The ogre returned and discovered them, but she persuaded him to delay killing them, fatten them with food, and send them to bed. In another bed slept his seven daughters, each wearing a golden crown. During the night Tom Thumb transferred the crowns to the heads of his brothers and himself. The ogre came, and, feeling the crowns, went to the other bed and killed his own children. He then returned to rest. Tom awoke his brothers, whispering in their ears, and immediately they all arose and escaped. The ogre next day pursued them in his seven-league boots, but Tom again outwitted him, and, by a trick, obtained his treasure, while the brothers safely reached their father's cottage.



"TOM AWOKED HIS BROTHERS, WHISPERING IN THEIR EARS, AND IMMEDIATELY THEY ALL AROSE AND ESCAPED."

Favourites from Perrault's Fairy Tales: The Wife of Bluebeard.

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"SHE DROPPED THE KEY . . . PICKED IT UP, AND SAW THAT IT WAS STAINED WITH BLOOD."

When Bluebeard went on a journey, leaving at home his newly-wedded wife, he gave her all his keys, that she might admire all his treasures; but one door he strictly forbade her to unlock. Nevertheless, curiosity overcame fear; she opened the door, and inside a little room she found hanging the bodies of his former wives. In her fright she dropped the key of the room; then, recovering herself, she picked it up, and saw that it was stained with blood. Scrub as she would, the stain would not come off, for the key was enchanted. Bluebeard returned, and saw that she had disobeyed him. "You must die!" he said. He gave her a few minutes to say her prayers. Meanwhile her sister Anne, from the top of the tower, looked out anxiously for her two brothers, who were coming to visit her, and, when at last she saw them, made signals of distress. They arrived just as Bluebeard was about to cut off his wife's head with a sword. He fled, but they pursued and slew him.

Favourites from Perrault's Fairy Tales: The Donkey-Skin Princess.

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"HER LITTLE ROOM . . . WAS TOO SMALL FOR THE TRAIN OF HER SKY-BLUE DRESS."

A certain King promised his dying wife he would take no second Queen less beautiful than herself. Finding none fairer, save their only child, he became distraught and resolved to marry his own daughter. On her fairy godmother's advice, the horrified Princess delayed the event by asking for a dress blue as the sky, then for one silvery as the moon, and thirdly for one golden as the sun. Lastly, she asked for the skin of the King's enchanted ass, which brayed gold. She donned it, stained herself with soot, and fled. Wearing the skin, she became a scullion at a farm, but the fairy enabled her to secrete her royal dresses, and she often put them on in her little room. It was too small for the train of her sky-blue dress, and she had to leave the door ajar. One day a young Prince visited the farm, and, peeping through the keyhole of her door, saw a vision of beauty. Donkey-Skin (as she was dubbed) married the Prince, and her father, who had found another wife, came to the wedding.

Favourites from Perrault's Fairy Tales: Cinderella—and the Pumpkin.

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"OF AN EVENING, TIRED AND GRUBBY WITH HER DAY'S WORK, SHE USED TO REST AMONG THE CINDERS IN THE CHIMNEY-CORNER."

CINDERELLA, as all the world knows, was ill-treated by her stepmother, who made her do all the menial work of the house, dressed in shabby clothes, while the stepmother and her own two daughters spent their time in enjoying themselves and flaunting about in their finery. Cinderella, however, had a gentle disposition and bore everything patiently. Of an evening, tired and grubby with her day's work, she used to rest among the cinders in the chimney-corner—hence her name. One day it happened that the King's son gave a ball, and Cinderella's two stepsisters were invited. She helped them to dress, and did their hair, showing no sign of envy, but after they had started she felt very sad and began to cry. Just then Cinderella's fairy godmother came to see her, and soon discovered the cause of her tears. "I promise," she said, "that you too shall go to the ball if you are a good girl." Then she sent her into the garden for a pumpkin, and Cinderella brought the finest pumpkin she could find, though she could not imagine how it would help her go to the ball. With her magic wand, the fairy changed the pumpkin into a magnificent coach, six mice into horses, a rat into a coachman, and six lizards into footmen. Then she touched Cinderella herself, and her shabby clothes became a beautiful ball-dress. So Cinderella went to the ball, and captivated the Prince, but on the second night she forgot the fairy's warning that, if she did not leave the Palace before midnight, all her splendours

would be changed back into their original forms. Thus she was only just in time to rush away before she became once more the kitchen drudge, while her coach was changed back into a pumpkin, the coachman into a rat, the footmen into lizards, and the horses into mice. But Cinderella, in her haste to escape, had left behind one of her magic glass slippers, and the Prince, who tried vainly to catch her, picked it up. Longing to meet again the mysterious Princess who had won his heart, he proclaimed that he would wed only her whose foot the slipper fitted. All the maidens in the land tried to wear it, but their feet were too large. Last of all it was brought to Cinderella, and she slipped it on quite easily. At that moment the fairy appeared and touched Cinderella with her wand, whereupon her rags were changed again into a magnificent dress. Her two stepsisters at once recognised her as the beautiful lady they had seen at the ball. Throwing themselves at her feet, they begged her to forgive them for all the unkindness she had suffered at their hands. Cinderella, who never bore ill-will, raised them up and embraced them, saying that she forgave them with all her heart, and only asked that they should love her dearly in the future. Then she was conducted to the young Prince, who found her more charming than ever, and a few days later they were married. Cinderella, who was as kind as she was beautiful, provided her stepsisters with apartments in the Royal Palace, and before long brought about their marriage to two great Lords of the Court.



"CINDERELLA BROUGHT THE FINEST PUMPKIN SHE COULD FIND, THOUGH SHE COULD NOT IMAGINE HOW IT WOULD HELP HER GO TO THE BALL."

The Taste of the Child of Yesteryear.



Forerunners of the modern doll: little French figures representing a gentleman-farmer of Normandy and his wife, made towards the end of the 18th century.



French children's playthings some 400 years ago: figurines in carved wood and iron, representing a lady of quality in a farthingale, and a miniature knight in armour for the game of *Chevaliers*.



A horse-drawn predecessor of the modern toy mechanical motor-car: a miniature French 18th-century equipage—the coachwork of hammered iron; the human figures and horses of Nevers glass.



A French wooden nut-cracker in the form of a Chinese, made about 1815.



A French jest of the Waterloo period (1815) in tiny-craft: "The Scales of the Allies," who, it was said, before returning home, had themselves weighed to see how much flesh they had put on while in France.



A miniature English vehicle of the "dogcart" type, driven by a dandy, of about 1820: a toy carriage made of wood and iron, and operated by clockwork.



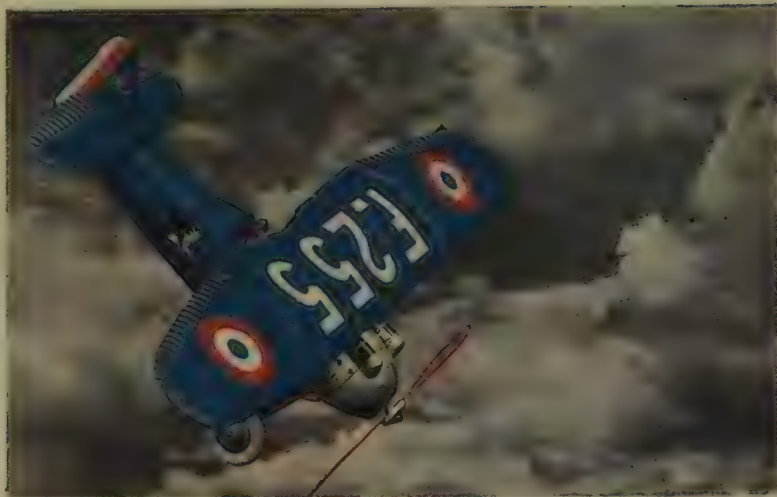
(Below): A Russian toy dating from the end of the 19th century: a representation of the Kremlin at Moscow, in detachable blocks of painted wood—here shown reflected in a sheet of glass on which it stands.

TOYS have existed throughout the ages, and it has been said that, wherever there has been a little girl, there has also been a doll, even if it consisted only of the end of a bough with two branches for arms. Various kinds of toys have been found in ancient Egyptian tombs, in the ruins of Pompeii, and in early Christian graves; among them rattles, tops, and hoops, besides dolls and little vases and utensils corresponding to the furniture of a modern child's dolls'-house. In the Middle Ages, the sole vendors of toys were mercers and haberdashers. In the 18th century, France took a leading part in toy-making, when artistic taste and skill were spreading among the people, but it was not a regular industry. The examples here shown come from two private French collections—the coach and six, the knight and lady, the Chinese figure, and the "Scales of the Allies" from that of M. Henry René d'Allemagne; and the rest from the Avelot Collection. It is interesting to compare these bygone playthings with the modern mechanical toys illustrated on page 12.



The affianced lovers: a typical pair of modern French dolls, made of non-inflammable material and dressed in a kind of children.

The Taste of the Child of To-day.



Man's latest mode of travel now popular in modern Toyland: a miniature "Dewoitina-Hispano" aeroplane, with all the characteristic features of the real thing faithfully reproduced in little.



(Right)
Modern railway engineering reproduced in miniature for the nursery: a network of lines, with trains, steam and motor engines, sleeping-cars, tank-cars, and luggage-vans, run by electricity; a station, signal-box, track-signals, and a bridge.



(Left)
A toy motor-car for the modern child: a "Eureka" model painted in varnished cellulose and comprising pneumatic tyres, shock-absorbers, electric lighting for head-lamps, and pocket for driving licence.



(Right)
A mechanical horse of 1934, mounted on rubber wheels: a realistic steed which a child can ride, propelling it by the covered pedals, and steering by means of handle-bars.

MODERN toys, especially those of the mechanical type, form a striking contrast to those of bygone times, of which examples are illustrated on page 11. Nowadays, the manufacture of toys has become a highly organised industry, employing thousands of people, and much of the work is done by machinery, on mass-production lines, instead of by handicraft, as formerly. The mechanical toy of to-day, again, is often an exact reproduction in miniature of the latest scientific inventions. To the toy railway have been added, in recent years, the toy motor-car and aeroplane, and also the toy wireless set and cinematograph apparatus. The modern doll is more realistic and attractive than those of the wood or sawdust stuffing variety which amused our great-grandmothers in their childhood. The art of building, again, can now be pursued in the nursery with much more elaborate and exciting materials than the old-time box of bricks, for wonderful structures can be produced by the ingenious systems known by such names as Meccano or Assembled, consisting of metal pieces made to dovetail into each other. Altogether, the modern boy and girl enjoy a wealth of toys that would have amazed the simple-minded children of the past.



Toys that can teach the young idea the rules of the road in motoring, and ingenuity in architectural design: a miniature Citroën car and a Renault motor-coach at a junction, with three buildings constructed of "Assembled" metal pieces dovetailing together.

THE THREE ESCAPES OF DELPHINE DE CUSTINE—(continued from page 6.)

could get her a false passport, and a disguise, the most suitable possible for someone so young and good-looking. In the costume of a lace-seller, Delphine was to escape to Brussels, and thence to Westphalia. It would be too dangerous for her to take Astolphe with her, so he and his nurse were to fly separately. They were to pass for mother and child, peasants of the Vosges. In Germany they would all meet, and go to live with Mme. de Sabran. Their plans were quite well laid. As they did not want to incriminate any of their servants at the flat (indeed, they could not be sure of their loyalty), nobody except the nurse was let into the secret. Unfortunately, Delphine gave her maid a bulky parcel to carry to M. Bertrand's residence one evening. The woman, scared of being accused of complicity in an escape, peeped into the parcel. . . .

On a February night, Delphine sat in her boudoir, dressed in her lace-seller's costume, busily tearing up letters which might get friends into trouble. There were many from her mother, and many, too many, from the gallant Prince of Salm-Kyrburg. He, poor gentleman, had been arrested some weeks ago, and was now awaiting his trial. She had already despatched Nanette, the nurse, on her way to the stage where one caught the conveyance for Strasbourg. Nanette had left the flat successfully, carrying the baby under her cloak. As soon as she got out of sight of her fellow-servants she would be able to uncover his little face, and hurry. . . . At the very last moment Delphine had remembered these dangerous letters. Hearing a peremptory knock on the door, she cast all that she had not yet been able to destroy into a cardboard box, and kicked it under the sofa on which she was sitting. There those documents remained until her release next autumn, for five minutes later Delphine de Custine was arrested. The maid who had denounced her began to cry. "Oh, Madame, forgive me!" She had been so frightened for her own skin. Delphine said sadly that if the girl had spied better she would have known that she was in no danger. So that none of her servants should be suspected of complicity, she had taken the trouble to leave a rope-ladder dangling from the balcony of this room.

Nanette Malriat, baby Astolphe's nurse, was a peasant, the daughter of a workman at the Nidervillers factory. She was not a clever woman, but she was a very faithful and lucky one. When the distracted M. Bertrand came hurrying to tell her that her mistress had failed to appear at the barrier where he was waiting with the forged passport, she did something not very intelligent. She returned to the flat. Here she found that the servants had fled, after stealing the plate and linen, and the seals of the Revolutionary Tribunal were set on the doors of every room except the kitchen. She proceeded to live in the kitchen for the next eight months. At first she was well off, for she had all the money which Delphine had given her for the journey to Germany. Then she sold her clothes one by one, to procure food for the baby. She began to learn prudence. One day, quite soon after her arrival in Paris, she had nearly lost her precious charge, not to speak of her own life. Nanette was naturally religious, and when she saw a group of Revolutionaries, attended by a mock priest, worshipping the heart of the murdered tyrant Marat, she rushed to the nearest woman and began to scold her for blasphemy. She should have known better than to do such a thing in a place so public as the Carrousel, especially when she was carrying a child clad in the finest of baby-clothes. At once someone shouted that she was an *aristo*. Someone else seized Astolphe from her arms. She fell. She rose again. She was actually being hurried along to the nearest street lamp (there was one at the corner of the Rue de Niçaise which would have done excellently to hang her upon), when an unknown man whispered to her that her only chance lay in acting the part of a mad-woman. Nanette danced and sang, and made mad faces. The crowd was deceived. But when at last she was three streets away, over the river, and her rescuer gave her back her nursling, she fell at his feet in a faint. . . .

Delphine was put into Les Carmes, the old Carmelite Convent, one of the worst prisons in the capital. Scarcely a stone of this building has been changed to this day. In the gloomy monastery of the Rue de Vaugirard, visitors to Paris can still see the little door through which the victims of the September Massacres were called, the narrow passage through which they were thrust to their death, the window with the grille, behind which the ghastly face of Maillard appeared, calling to his troop of murderers: "Wait a bit! Don't kill them so fast! They are going to be tried!"

Les Carmes had a large garden (it is smaller to-day), in which all the prisoners, male and female, were allowed to mingle in the evenings. They knew that close under its soil lay the bodies of the priests who had been butchered here, and they knew that six o'clock was the hour when the Tribunal sent for its victims, but they played games every evening in the garden of Les Carmes. When a gentleman heard his name called, he would merely bow to the ladies and slip off silently, and the play went on. . . .

The play went on, and amongst the seven hundred inhabitants of the old convent Delphine found several old friends and made some new ones.

Fortunately she had splendid health, and considered it her duty to show no disgust at her fare or surroundings. She was still only twenty-three, and lovelier than ever. "As beautiful as an angel—one of those exquisite creatures that God gives to the world in a moment of munificence." Handsome, pompous young General Alexandre de Beauharnais fell hopelessly in love with the fair girl-widow who was always light-hearted. He had once been renowned as the best dancer in Paris, and was of exactly the type that pleased Delphine. But they had never met before, for although "General Moustache" had known General de Beauharnais in the Army, the Beauharnais had not moved in the same circle as the Sabrans and the Custines. General de Beauharnais' wife had never been presented to Marie-Antoinette. She was a sallow little Creole from Martinique, and she made everyone blush for her. Day after day she lay on her pallet bed, only desisting from sobs of terror to tell her fortune feverishly by means of cards. An ancient negress had once foretold that Josephine de Beauharnais should some day be Queen of France. It didn't seem likely.

You couldn't really upset Mme. de Custine. While she was being questioned by the Tribunal, she amused herself making a clever little sketch of the ugly men who were her judges. Delphine could draw quite well, though not so well as her mother, who had never been happier than when doing pastel portraits of her lovely child—Delphine at eight years old, attired in a miniature Court dress, with a laced bodice and paniers, and a wreath of artificial roses in her silvery fair hair—Delphine smiling at a portrait of herself holding her pet spaniel in her arms. . . . Delphine, attired in the single cotton robe allotted to the female prisoners at Les Carmes, smiled still. She found these persons "as ridiculous as they were atrocious." The president of this revolutionary jury was a malicious hunchback, a shoemaker by trade. He declared that the citizeness's shoes were of English manufacture. She was a traitor to her country! She told the Tribunal the name of the man who made her footwear. He was the old Court shoemaker, a person they wanted to track down.

"A bad patriot!" cried the president of the jury.

"But he made such good shoes!" said Delphine sweetly.

"Do you know where he is now?"

"No. And if I did I should not tell you."

One of the worst of the ruffians present, a rough master-mason called Gérôme, snatched from her the paper on which she had been idly pencilling. Delphine had made a glorious caricature of the scene of her inquisition. Gérôme held it up, and everyone recognised the hunchbacked president standing on his chair, flapping the poor little shoe which he accused of being English, in the faces of a gaping company.

"Look! See how you are flattered! The citizeness finds you handsome—*ma foi!*" The hunchback kept the sketch. Delphine's irrepressible frivolity had made



The gentlemen who had been breaking up the chairs to use for barricades stiffened with alarm.

a personal enemy of him. She didn't know yet that it had also saved her life a second time. Gérôme, the mason, perfectly bewitched by her spirit and her fragile beauty, was henceforward her slave. He had secretly determined that she should not die. But he took care not to let her suspect his infatuation. He always behaved with the utmost incivility when he encountered her.

But Gérôme knew where Fouquier-Tinville kept his card-index, that box containing a bundle of sheets, each headed by the name of a prisoner awaiting trial. Fouquier counted the number of the sheets every morning, but he did not appear to notice their order. Every evening, when Fouquier left his office on the first floor of the Tour d'Argent in the dreaded Conciergerie, Gérôme stole in, and, taking the paper headed "Delphine de Custine," shoved it to the bottom of the pile. Pinned to Delphine's sheet was the sketch which had won her the hatred of the hunchbacked president. If once she came to trial, nobody could save her. One night Gérôme could not sleep. Tumbling on his clothes, he tiptoed across to the tower room, and with trembling fingers drew forth the fatal box. His premonition had been right. Delphine's was the first name that met his eyes. Someone else, wishing to save a loved one, had been at the papers. Well, Robert Wolff, Fouquier's clerk, was known to detest his master and be open to a bribe. If Gérôme had not come, to-morrow Delphine would have died.

But at last there were only three papers left in the box. During the past nine days, three hundred and forty-two heads had fallen. Since the death of Danton, Maximilien Robespierre was absolute; Robespierre, trussed-up in a costume reminiscent of Court days—skin-tight breeches, silk stockings, high cravat, scented bouquet, "like a dancing-master of the old régime," "like a lynx dressed for a ball," said his enemies. And the ungrateful people of Paris were getting bored of the guillotine. The

there was young Mr. MacPherson, not a Frenchman at all, a Scot, of Jacobite descent. But he had lived in Paris all his life, and been apprenticed to a Court jeweller, which was an accusation in itself. And there was an old Englishwoman, deaf and half-blind, who never could make out why she had been brought to this extraordinary place and made to share a room with thirteen other people. She never stopped asking her fellow-prisoners the reason. "The guillotine answered her last question."

In Les Carmes the cells were ill-lighted, half of their windows had been stopped up, their doors led into black passages through which, at stated hours, the prisoners were herded to meals in the old refectory. There was no fountain here, as at the Conciergerie. The ladies could not wash their gowns. The men were forced to go bare-legged, bare-necked, and unshaven.

Delphine knew that her trial could only be put off another few days. During the past week nearly all her friends had been reft from her. Even the comical little woman who kept the marionette show was removed on a certain thunderous July evening. She went very bravely, dropping the prettiest curtsies to the ladies of high birth, and telling them what an honour she had considered it to be permitted to wait upon them. The jailers had been changed, and changed for the worse. An order came that the prisoners were no longer to walk in the garden. Obviously some new horror was impending. When the women, cut off now from intercourse with the men, asked the jailers what was the meaning of the dull thudding sound that had disturbed them all day, one man answered: "We are digging your graves."

The night of the twenty-seventh of July was exceedingly hot. A little before midnight a storm broke over Paris, and from their reeking cells the prisoners of Les Carmes heard, between peals of thunder, the tocsin at the Hôtel de Ville ringing. They believed this to be the signal



So "la Belle Custine" returned to her flat, and found Nanette still living in its kitchen, having made up two little beds there.

inhabitants of the Rue Saint-Honoré had actually petitioned that it might be removed to another part of the town. They were tired of seeing the tumbrils pass under their windows to the Place de la Révolution. A rumour spread to Les Carmes that Robespierre was going to start massacres in the prisons again. Sending prisoners up for trial wasted time.

It was dreadful in Les Carmes these days, for this season of the Terror was a heat-wave summer. Josephine de Beauharnais became so ill that the Polish doctor who was allowed to attend her, gave her only a week to live. One morning the jailer entered her cell and told her to get off her sacking mattress. He needed it for another prisoner. "What," asked her room-mate, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, "is Mme. de Beauharnais to have a new bed?" "No," leered the man, "she will not be needing one."

Josephine was imprisoned in the terrible *Chambre des Epées*, so called because its walls were still stained by the blood from three swords which had leant against them during the last massacre here. Her husband had been called away from playing games in the garden three nights before, and now she was a widow. As he passed to his trial, Alexandre de Beauharnais slipped into the hand of Delphine de Custine a little Arab ring. . . . That same day the Prince of Salm-Kyrbourg was summoned to his death. Delphine need not have troubled to stay behind in her flat on that February evening last winter, tearing up his charming letters. . . . Her two admirers went to their deaths in the same tumbril.

Of course, not everyone in Les Carmes was of distinguished birth. There was, for instance, little Mme. Loison. She and her husband had been proprietors of a puppet-show in the Champs-Élysées. They had been arrested on an accusation of having mocked at Marat. Also, their marionette performances had had an aristocratic air. Mme. Loison, enchanted at finding herself under the same roof as so many ladies of quality, and horrified at the life that they were obliged to live, insisted on acting as ady's-maid to as many as possible. She was a pathetic little soul. Then

for the massacre to begin. The gentlemen who had been breaking up the chairs to use for barricades, stiffened with alarm. Crouching against the walls, the ladies covered their faces and waited for approaching footsteps. But day dawned, and, although there was a great deal of shuffling and whispering going on in the passages outside, nothing had happened yet. Late that afternoon, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon felt faint and tottered to the window of her cell to get some air.

Josephine de Beauharnais, in her account of the story, says that she was supporting her sick friend, when, to their great surprise, they saw a woman of the people standing in the garden below, smiling and nodding to them like anything. She plucked at her dress, shook it, and looked at them to see if they understood her signals. Josephine called out: "Robe?" Next the woman picked up a stone and put it into her skirt. Yes, yes; a stone, a *pierrre*; they understood. *Robe* and *pierrre*. Was she trying to tell them that something had happened to Robespierre? The woman grinned delightedly, made a sign, several times, of a throat being severed, and then began to dance and clap. In the same moment, while the two ladies waited between hope and fear, they heard a turnkey coming along their passage at last. As the man entered he kicked aside his dog, saying contemptuously: "Get along now, Robespierre!"

The tyrant's name had become a joke, for Maximilien Robespierre had fallen. After being arrested by his enemies yesterday, he had attempted to commit suicide, but they had patched him up for the guillotine this afternoon. The Terror was over. Out in the streets of Paris (which had rapidly been becoming like those of a city of the dead), total strangers fell upon one another's necks and embraced for joy and relief. Josephine de Beauharnais was soon released from Les Carmes, but Delphine de Custine was not so lucky. For two mortal months after most of her friends had departed she was still there, and light-hearted Delphine has confessed, characteristically, that this period of her confinement was the one that oppressed her most.

[Continued on page 52]

TRUDA.

By DOUGLAS NEWTON, :: ::

Author of "Red Judas," "Dr. Adin," etc.

:: Illustrated by JOHN CAMPBELL.

THE first flecks of December snow: Kildare's new student-assistant humming "*Roselein Roth*" . . . suddenly Ray Warwick knew what had been fretting him for the past few days. Vienna was calling him—Vienna and Truda.

"*Roselein—Roselein—Roselein . . . roth . . .*"

The girl assistant had been a prey to Schubert's unescapable tune for a week. No doubt that had started him off. Yet it seemed something deeper to Ray Warwick. As if the tune was but the means of a message . . . as if he were hearing Truda's voice across the years, Truda herself calling him from Vienna. Truda had sung that song. It had been part of the "real old Viennese Christmas" she had arranged for him—as real as Blockade conditions allowed.

She had managed by some miracle—but she was good at miracles, Truda—to serve up the traditional fried carp and potatoes, bean salad and nut pancakes. The Blockade and poverty had forbidden the fruits, the pastries and Moselle. Yet in spite of that and the Peace that had not meant such Good Will on earth, she had made him and the children happy, especially as she sang.

Warwick heard her warm, husky voice now; saw her pale face, glowing like fine gold in the dusty, other-worldly light of the two cheap candles the Lighting Regulations had permitted. . . . *Roselein, Roselein, Roselein roth.* . . . How the very melody called back the dream-like beauty of that candle-lit moment, how its wistfulness brought up Truda! He left his work, strayed to the big windows. Clean, sharp sunlight, with flecks of snow glancing down. How like the golden brightness of Vienna! How often had he walked the Ring with Truda on just such days!

Kildare, seeing he had left his microscope, asked: "How are things coming out?" Ray Warwick looked at Kildare, lean, whitish, desiccated; the perfect laboratory machine, exact and emotionless. The sort of intellectual Robot he would become himself in time.

"Ever seen the Kärntnerstrasse or the Graben busy with Christmas shoppers, Kildare?" he asked.

"The Kärntnerstrasse—the Graben?" Kildare made them sound as though they were symptoms of diseases. "What have they to do with germ cultures, Ray?"

"Oh, they're just other crowded patches of life," Warwick smiled. "Only human. I'm wondering whether you and I don't tend to forget the human for the germ mass. We ought to mix more with our fellow men. Be jostled, make contacts, warm ourselves with the common life."

"Don't you get all you want from your Out Patients?" Kildare looked at the clock. "Whom you're due to see in ten minutes."

"Just—cases," Ray Warwick shrugged. He was seeing Truda running like a flame through the snowy fairyland of the Volksgarten. Truda had not been a case—she'd been youth and loveliness, laughter and first love.

"No doubt," began Kildare, "meanwhile our streptococci. . . ." But there was humanity even in his arid depths. "I've been thinking for some time you needed a holiday, Ray."

"Perhaps that's it," Warwick mused. "It doesn't do to shut out common humanity too long."

The Outpatients' Department with its long line of suffering humanity and the awed students hanging on his slightest pronouncements, made things worse. It carried him almost bodily back to the Mission Clinic in Vienna where he had first met Truda. It had been in those ghastly after-war years, when even the singing spirit of Vienna had succumbed to the terror of starvation. He had been attached to one of the Missions that attempted to tackle the gigantic task of healing and feeding the quarter of a million starved and rickety children—to say nothing of the adults.

Truda had been one of his helpers on the medical side. She had been barely twenty and quite untrained, but she had a way with her; a sort of warm, sweet, light-hearted pity that charmed the babies she handled. Only Warwick had not even noticed that until Lodling had forced her upon his attention. Lodling was an orderly; a nasty, sly, slug of a fellow; one of those fattish, unhealthy creatures who always manage to find a good billet and good food when better men starve. The reason for his plumpness was not far to seek. Foods and extracts were being taken from the Mission's store, and it was only natural to suspect Lodling.

Lodling knew he was suspected, with reason; he was really the thief. But he was also cunning. He knew that if he could provide another victim he might escape himself. He provided Truda. He had seen her slip a two-ounce jar of chicken essence into her blouse. He dragged her before Warwick at once. Truda did not deny it; she wasn't the type to lie, Warwick saw. Not that Lodling gave her a chance. Standing behind her as he accused her, he caught her blouse and pulled



Standing behind her . . . he caught her blouse and pulled it tight against her body, so that the stolen jar stood out between the almost fleshless curve of her ribs.

it tight against her body. That young body was so emaciated, so scantily clad that the stolen jar stood out between the almost fleshless curve of her ribs.

The sight of those hungry ribs, the tiny, under-nourished breasts, turned Warwick's heart over in sheer pity. He ought to have been severe, since the only hope of fighting the terrible famine about them was strictness in matters like this. But all he did was to toe Lodling out of the room and cross-examine Truda with a sense of shame. She admitted having stolen other pots of extract. She agreed she ought to be sorry—but how could she be? She had two brothers and two sisters all younger than herself at home, and they were all hungry in spite of the Missions. The baby, for instance, was crying itself ill with hunger. How could a girl bear that when she worked all day in a place where extra food could be easily taken?

Her queer courage, even more than her story, abashed Ray Warwick. She stood before him a straight, thin slip of a girl, her face white, for she expected dismissal, yet she still flew the flag of a smile. They were remarkable, these Viennese women. She knew what terrors she had to face when turned wageless into a starving town, yet she faced him gallantly, with an air of unconquerable grace despite her fears. That was the Viennese all over—Butterflies, the solidier Germans called them, but what bright courage in the face of disaster was not hidden under their butterfly charm?

Truda showed him some of it. At under twenty she was the mother protector and provider of a family of five. Her parents, of the secondary nobility, therefore poor, had been among the first victims of *unternährung*; proud butterflies who had shown her it was nobler to die from lack of food than that their children should suffer. Truda was left to maintain her brood of four in a block of flats near the Danube. After tending them each morning she left them in charge of a sister of sixteen and walked the breadth of Vienna to her work. And walked back at night. There was no money to spare for trams.

Of course, Ray Warwick had not been able to sack her. He looked at her white smile and did not even lecture her on her "crime." In fact, having put the stolen essence back on to his shelves, he took her by the elbow to the Mission Canteen and bought a parcel of food for her brothers and sisters. Not for her. He wasn't such a fool as to think she'd take her fair share. He made certain of her not denying herself for the others by carrying her off to a little eating place he knew in the Street of the Beautiful Lantern. There he filled her up with *klösse und pfäulen mit Speck*—plum dumplings eaten with bacon, the most sustaining dish the famine and his own pocket could provide.

She protested in her warmly husky voice that her *kinderchen* would be anxious at her absence; but he showed her that by taking cabs instead of walking, she would arrive home but little later than usual. Even at that meal he realised the strange quality of her and her kind; a spirit that could remain gay amid even the husks of disaster. As they were eating, the three-piece band struck up a waltz; at once her small head lifted like a flower at the coming of the sun; she looked at him shyly,

bright-eyed. She was hungry, yet she would dance. . . . That was Truda . . . that was Vienna.

She danced flawlessly, as though music as well as blood ran in her veins. Looking down, he saw the stress wiped from her face in the glamour of the moment. In that moment she was sparkling, enchanting, exquisite, the very soul of Vienna. In that moment he fell in love with her.

She had never fallen in love with him. He knew she never could from the first. There was always that clear frankness in her that made it plain. It made no difference to him. He loved her and he always would—that was his type, a one-woman man. Loving her, he looked after her as best he could; saw to it that she was reasonably well fed by persuading her to take pity on his lonely café meals. He was even able to satisfy her need for warmer—yes, and prettier—clothes, though he had to be most tactful there. Even butterflies have reserves and pride. Still, by making presents of garments and boots to her brothers and sisters, some of her small wages were saved to spend on herself.

Queer, he could never have done any of this if he had not been so poor himself. Poverty won her comradeship where she would have distrusted a rich man. Warwick had not, in fact, joined the relief missions entirely from motives of charity. He had seen in them his chance of studying at that master school of medicine, the University of Vienna. Though he had passed out of hospital brilliantly, he never had money enough to afford those post-graduate courses abroad so necessary for his ambitions in the research work of diagnosis.

Truda found an actual joy in his being poor—it gave her an opportunity to mother him. It was delicious the way this little butterfly, six years his junior, took him in hand. He was living, she insisted, like a millionaire in a hotel, a cab ride away from his work and the hospital. Magically she found him a quiet room in a big block near the Universitäts-Kliniken at a quarter the rent. He was "eating gold," she wailed, when she heard of his casual meals, and showed him how he could eat well at ridiculous cheapness on a strip-ticket system. As she helped him unpack in his new room, she twittered with a wing-fluttering dismay at the state of his linen, and solemnly she set aside a night a week to come and see to his sewing and laundry.

"Oh, we are feather-brains, we Viennese," she laughed when he protested. "Still, we have hearts. And then, you and I have much in common. We are good friends, we are poor, and we are ambitious."

"Your ambitions are not for yourself, Truda," he smiled.

"Aren't they?" she mocked. "I mean to marry a fat *schieber* with ten million kronen and a palace on the Löwelstrasse."

"Even your fat profiteer won't be for yourself. He'll be for Kathi and Stefan and Helene and Ludwig."

She did not deny it. She had a crystalline frankness, always.

"Aren't they the responsibility—yes?" she laughed. "Was ever a little gad-about so burdened? That is why he must be a very fat profiteer. In these times good marriages for the girls and positions for the boys are the only hope."

He heard the little trill of fear in her voice and understood. He had seen the daughters of good families bartering their smiles for a meal or an evening's warmth in the cafés of the currency gamblers. This butterfly was fighting against that.

"But not any fat profiteer," he objected.

"Well—no—I think I will have to like him, too," she mused. "Yes, he must be something else as well . . . big, fine . . ."

Yes, she must have fineness in love and real love. For he had said: "If you will only wait until I have made my fortune, Truda."

"No," she answered.

"That would not be fair. To marry *you* I must love you, the real thing. You see, you love me—could I give you less?"

Strange creature—be wildering. For a marriage of convenience she might sacrifice her heart—but for a lover, it must be real love. Yet even as she said this she was sitting, Turk-kneed, on the divan that made his bed, darning a woeful undershirt by the light of a single candle; also she dropped her sewing to pull his head towards hers and kiss him—to take the sting out of the pain she knew her words had caused.

Her kisses, like her coming to mend and chatter in his room, were as spontaneous and unheeding as the flight of a bird. War conditions

still held; they trusted each other, they were comrades. What did the rules of the old fogies matter when they knew each other? At times he felt he should not have allowed her to be so free of his room, yet he had not the heart, even by hints, to destroy a companionship that had an almost incorporeal loveliness. They were, after all, but two children picnicking on the clean mountain-tops of youth. There was no more harm in such companionship than their many other bright and glancing outings in and about the town.

Or he found no harm in it until that evening that Lodling found it for him. Returning to his room from seeing her home, he heard Lodling's voice smirk out of the dimness of the landing beneath his. Lodling's voice wishing him good-night with a greasy unction, adding a double-edged remark about Truda that made Warwick ready to take him by the throat and throttle the life out of him.

How he held his hand then, he never knew. The brute was only fit for killing, for he was there to blackmail. He had been spying on them for months, and his slimy mind had manufactured an "affair" out of their companionship from which he hoped to get big money. Warwick, being English, must be, to his mind, both rich and extremely proper, while his official status would make him dread a scandal.

It might have been an ignoble business, but Lodling had chosen the wrong hour. Pressure was easing at the Missions. In Warwick's own clinic Austrian doctors were now taking over; and for some time Warwick had known that he was free to leave Vienna when he liked. Indeed, Kildare had written months ago to tell him there was a post waiting when he liked to come home and take it. Even Truda's need of him was over. Warwick's work in the University had won him the friendship of a leading surgeon, and through this man Warwick had obtained for her a permanent and better-paid post in a Government office.

For weeks, then, Warwick had known he ought to go, that it was time to return and begin his career—only he had been unable to tear himself away from Vienna and Truda. Now Lodling forced his hand. He did not tell Truda about Lodling. Being poor, she was safe from the cad. But one night when the limes in the Ring smelt honey sweet, he walked in the Volksgarten with her for the last time, telling her that Kildare had wired for him.

"Vienna is going to be so strange without you, Ray, dear," she wept in dismay.

"Life is going to be very empty without you, Truda," he answered. "If you would only come with me."

"Dear, if I only could—but could I be false?" she said.

He knew she could not. Butterfly though she was, she had to give love for love—to one man and no other. He understood that well. It was so with himself. Yet she was torn at his going.

"I am losing my dearest friend, Ray," she said.

"I am still your dearest friend. We'll write." He thought of Lodling. "And if ever you should need me, send, and I will come to you at once."

"I know. You are a man who would come back across the world for those you love," she nodded.

"And you are the man I would send for if I needed a man."

So they had kissed and parted, and something shining had gone out of his life—to come back now at the lilt of a song. For the assistant was still humming "*Roselein*" when he got back, filling his soul with a longing for Vienna and Truda that was like an intolerable ache.

What had become of Truda? he wondered.

They had exchanged a few letters, then life and work had swamped them both. Was she still alive? Was she happy, despite all these troubles in Austria? Had she found her profiteer—a nice one? Somehow, he felt she had. There had always been a clear wisdom behind her gossamery spirit that promised a wise choice and ultimate happiness. He hoped she was happy. He still loved her. He felt no soreness at the thought of her loving another; he was grateful for the glowing moments of perfect memory she had given him. He ought, even, be grateful for what he had become through not marrying her.

He had given his life to his work instead, had concentrated on preventive medicine, striving to master the earliest stages by which disease attacks the human organism. He had had his triumphs. The hospitals spoke

She was sitting, Turk-kneed, on the divan that made his bed, darning a woeful undershirt by the light of a single candle.

(Continued on page 46.)

"The Night Before Christmas": The Arrival of Santa Claus.



"A miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer, With a little old driver so lively and quick, I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick."

Everyone knows the Silly Symphonies of Mr. Walt Disney, the inventor of that world-famous "film star," Mickey Mouse, who "presents" the Symphonies with him. On this and the next three pages we illustrate scenes from an excellent and seasonable example, reproduced from original coloured drawings made for the film by courtesy of Mr. Disney and of United Artists Corporation, together with a poem appropriate to the pictures, St. Nicholas, of course, is generally known to-day as Santa Claus, or Father Christmas.

The Night Before Christmas

(A Visit from St. Nicholas).

'Twas the night before Christmas,
when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring,
not even a mouse.
The stockings were hung
by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas
soon would be there ;
The children were nestled
all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums
danced in their heads.
And Mamma in her 'kerchief,
and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains
for a long winter's nap,

[Continued overleaf.



"Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound."

"The Night Before Christmas": Decking the Tree with Toys.



At the sound of a little trumpet blown by Santa Claus, all the toys come out of his bag and begin to help him decorate the Christmas tree.



Toy soldiers shoot ornaments on to the Christmas tree out of toy cannons.

When out on the lawn there rose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutter and threw up the sash.
The moon, on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
Gave the lustre of midday to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny rein-deer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick;
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name :
"Now, Dasher ! now, Dancer ! now, Prancer and Vixen !
On, Comet ! on, Cupid ! on, Donner and Blitzen !

To the top of the porch ! to the top of the wall !
Now dash away ! dash away ! dash away, all !"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle mount to the sky,
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of Toys, and St. Nicholas too,
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof,
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof—
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a pedlar just opening his pack.

(Continued overleaf.)



Meanwhile, an orchestra of tiny Pierrots plays lively music under the Christmas tree.

"The Night Before Christmas": Finishing Touches to the Tree.



A clockwork motor car arrives with a further supply of decorations for the Christmas tree, and a stocking is filled by a toy crane on caterpillar wheels.



Dolls and animals dance round the lighted Christmas tree, on to which tinsel has been "smoke-screened" by a toy aeroplane, while a miniature Zeppelin carries up the golden star to be fixed on the top.

"The Night Before Christmas": The Departure of Santa Claus.



While all the toys are dancing and having a great time, a hearty laugh from Santa Claus awakens the children sleeping upstairs, and they come clamouring down to see the fun.

His eyes—how they twinkled !
 His cheeks were like roses,
 His droll little mouth
 His dimples how merry !
 His nose like a cherry !
 was drawn up like a bow,
 And the beard of his chin
 was as white as the snow ;
 He had a broad face and a round little belly,
 That shook when he laughed,
 like a bowlful of jelly.
 He was chubby and plump,
 a right jolly old elf,
 And I laughed when I saw him,
 in spite of myself ;
 A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
 Soon gave me to know
 I had nothing to dread.
 He spoke not a word,
 but went straight to his work,
 And fill'd all the stockings ;
 then turned with a jerk,
 And laying his finger aside of his nose,
 And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose ;
 He sprang to his sleigh,
 to his team gave a whistle,
 And away they all flew
 like the down of a thistle.
 But I heard him exclaim,
 ere he drove out of sight,
 "HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL,
 AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT."



"He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle, And away they all flew like the down of a thistle."

Famed in Christmas Pantomime and Story: The Jovial Ali Baba.

FROM THE PAINTING BY EDMUND DULAC.



THANKS TO "OPEN SESAME!"

ALI BABA, THE POOR BROTHER OF THE WEALTHY CASSIM, WHO BESTED THE FORTY THIEVES
AND CAME TO LIVE IN HONOUR AND SPLENDOUR.

Hundreds and thousands of children have been made familiar with the story of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," not to mention the sharp-witted Morgiana; while the magic words "Open Sesame!" by which the poor brother of Cassim gained entrance to the robbers' treasure-cave, have become a common metaphor in our language. This universal popularity of the old tale among the younger generation is due, in part, to reading "The Arabian Nights," and partly to seeing frequent presentations of it as a Christmas pantomime. There came a time also when it made an equally strong appeal to grown-up "children," for Ali Baba, it may be recalled, figured as a leading character in that enormously successful war-time production, "Chu Chin Chow," and this famous musical play has recently acquired fresh vitality in the form of a film version, wherein Mr. George Robey is seen in the rôle of Ali Baba.

"Nothing New Under the Sun": Games that are Ageless.



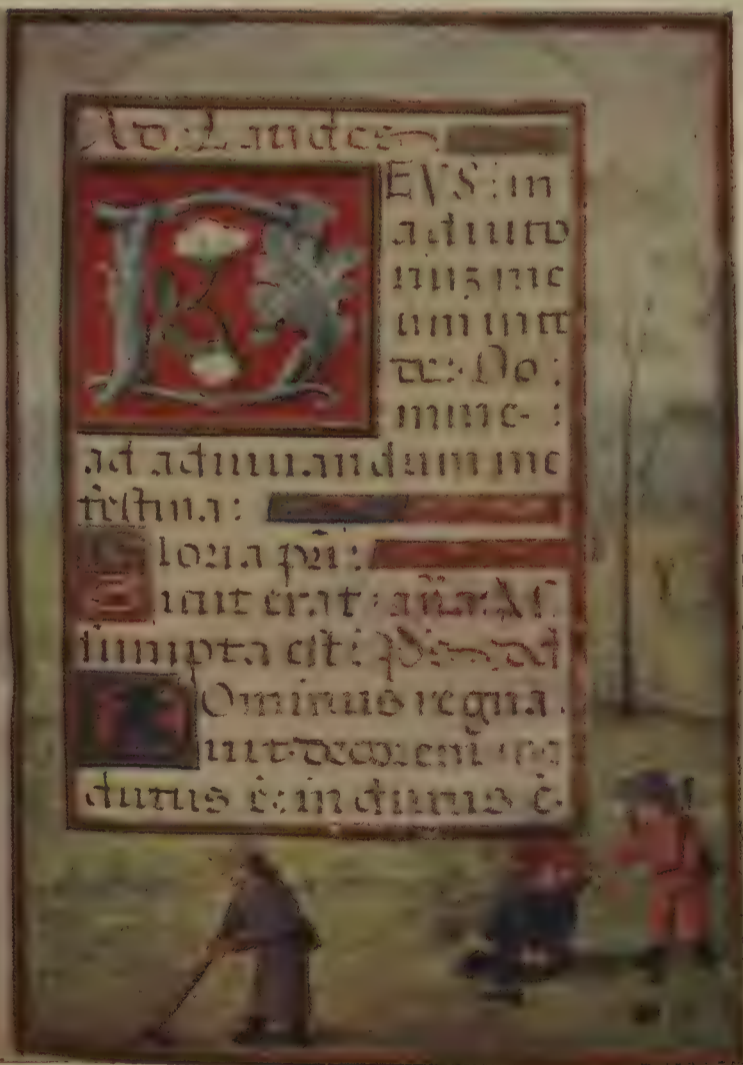
Playing with Hoops as Illustrated in "The Golf 'Hours'" Manuscript: An Ancient Pastime Still Enjoyed To-day.



The Whipping Top of Hundreds of Years Ago—as Shown in a Border Decoration to an Illumination of a Religious Subject.



A Ball Game that Suggests Croquet in "The Golf 'Hours'" Manuscript: One of several such "Games" Pages, Each of 3½ by 2½ inches.



Golfers Addressing a Ball, Putting, and (at side above) at the Top of a Swing: A Delightful Illumination in an Early Sixteenth-Century Manuscript.

Hoops, whipping tops, croquet and golf—all these games and pastimes of to-day were known to our forefathers in very similar forms. Witness these charming illuminations of the early sixteenth-century Ghent-Bruges school, all taken from "The Golf 'Hours,'" a manuscript formerly in the Chester Beatty Collection, which came under the hammer at Sotheby's last year.

“Nothing New Under the Sun”: The White Christmas Game.



Snowballing in the Fifteenth Century: A Christmas Scene from the Chantilly "Book of Hours."

This delightful illumination, from the fifteenth-century Chantilly "Book of Hours," shows how deeply rooted in the past is a traditional winter pastime of to-day. Not only the children but the grown-ups are enjoying themselves throwing snowballs at each other; and in the foreground is a pair rolling a big snowball along the ground.



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FROM THE PAINTING BY ARTHUR D. MCCORMICK; EXHIBITED AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY, 1861.

"THE LAST FIGHT OF OLD BENBOW."

"Admiral Benbow, horribly mangled, his right leg smashed by a chain shot, had his cot brought on deck, and signalled for a general chase. His captains took no notice whatever of this order, and at last, in despair, Benbow summoned Kirby on board to explain his conduct." This occurred in an engagement with the French in the West Indies in August 1702. Admiral Benbow died of his wounds, at Jamaica, in the following November.

CANADA



SOUTH AFRICA



NEW ZEALAND



CHRISTMAS ROUND THE EMPIRE.—I.

*What should they know of Christmas joys
who only Christmas know
Where winter comes with fog and gloom
and mud-stained London snow?*

*Across the trails of Newfoundland,
or Canada's mountain ways,
With sleigh or snow-shoe to the feast
the Christmas reveller strays.*

*Bermuda knows the court and net;
Malaya, goal and try;
While Kenya pledges absent friends
beneath a sunlit sky,*

*South Africa, on summer's peak,
sets out at Christmas time
To where the picnic cloth is spread
all in a golden clime.*

NEWFOUNDLAND



MALAYA



BERMUDA



KENYA



C. L. LUNN

NEW SOUTH WALES

TASMANIA

WEST AUSTRALIA

CHRISTMAS ROUND THE EMPIRE.—II.

*Christmas diversions that befall
by Australasian foam—
Golf, riding, yachting—wear the hues
of midsummer at Home.*

*So, too, the warm West Indian wave
lures to a Christmas dip ;
While summer frocks at far Hong-Kong
invade a British ship.*

*In Christmas heat Rhodesia hears
broadcast the Royal word ;
And sultry India's Christmas mail
arrives by man-made "bird."*

*Thus, round our far-flung Commonwealth,
in distant lands and strange,
From northern frosts to tropic seas,
the joys of Christmas change.*

C. E. Byles.



TRINIDAD



HONG KONG

RHODESIA



INDIA

Christmas-tide on the Ice: An Elizabethan Thames Fair.

FROM THE PICTURE BY MURIEL BRODERICK



HIGH WASSAIL ON THE FROZEN THAMES.

ROASTING AN OX ON THE ICE BY OLD LONDON BRIDGE DURING THE GREAT FROST OF 1565.

In the Great Frost, "while the country people suffered the extremity of want . . . London enjoyed a carnival of the utmost brilliancy," Mrs. Woolf tells us in "Orlando." Doubtless, she is describing the Great Frost which fell some years after Queen Elizabeth's death, but yielded scenes similar to that depicted by our artist—for fashions and life in general moved more slowly in those spacious days. Here are some of the wonders that Mrs. Woolf tells us there were then to be beholden at Christmas-tide: "Vast bonfires of cedar and oak wood, lavishly salted, so that the flames were of green, orange, and purple fire. But however fiercely they burnt, the heat was not enough to melt the ice which, though of singular transparency, was yet of the hardness of steel. . . . But it was at night that the carnival was at its merriest. For the frost continued unbroken; the nights were of perfect stillness; the moon and the stars blazed with the hard fixity of diamonds, and to the fine music of flute and trumpet the courtiers danced."



There delicate damsels bask in the perfumed air, wafted from the groves of cinnamon and nutmeg trees . . .

THE ISLE OF CRYSTAL

Translated from the French of DR. J.-C. MARDRUS.

Illustrations by PRIOU.

OUR fathers, our grandfathers, and their fathers before them have handed down this tale of wonder. It is perhaps hard for us to understand, but the Omnipotent Being is wiser, and more discerning than mortal men and women.

Far beyond the lands and the seas of which we have knowledge, at the western extremity of the countries of Sin and Masin, there lies, between two blue horizons, a vast magic Isle. And that island is named, in a tongue unknown to us, the great Isle Wak-Wak; but the few navigators who have, by chance, caught a glimpse of it, call it the Crystal Isle, Djazirat al Ballour.

Now in that Island, the prodigy and marvel of all the jewels of the sea, and there only, and but for a moment, Pure Happiness elected to live on earth. It was there that the Sultan Love once held supreme empire over two hearts.

In this Island there are many wonders. The tigers themselves live in harmony with men and the other animals, and do but open their magnificent jaws, innocent of blood, in order to bless the Creator of Beauty with the sacred words, "Allah ou Akbar." There, too, the lords of the fighting elephants

ride on the backs of their beasts, not caparisoned for war, and ready to hurl themselves with frenzy into battle to destroy hostile battalions, but simply to breathe the air of the mountains, seated under the shade of brocade parasols, as they suck contentedly at juicy sugar-canes.

There delicate damsels bask in the perfumed air, wafted from the groves of cinnamon and nutmeg trees, or swing themselves, balancing like exquisite humming-birds, at the tips of giant creepers and boughs. There the arches of the bridges over the rivers are of burnished gold. And the bridges themselves, of ivory and turquoise, are never crossed by the riders, who, so as to run no risk of wearing out the precious materials, prefer to use the fords, and thus they sweeten their horses and elephants in the milk and honey which flows up to the brink of these enchanted streams.

It is even there that the light kiosks and belvederes serve as resting places for the exquisite spirits of the hills and that the staircases, of porphyry and silver, which grace the prospect are only there, in very truth, to add a touch of earthly beauty to the divine sites and their landscapes.

Once upon a time in that Isle of Enchantment there lived, in her diamond splendour, a Maiden, whose beauty clouded the full moon of the month of Ramadan with the veil of confusion, and whose immaculate whiteness vied with the jasmin.

She was called by the blessed name of Hrakatal Kouloub, Flame-of-Hearts. And it was in very truth of that Queen of Gazelles that the Poet sang:

"Ethereal Child of the Genii, when once man has set eyes upon her, she is an enchantment for the beholder.

"Maid of gold, verily; two Babylonian eyes and poppy-cheeks, shaming-pomegranate her lips, lesson-of-modesty-for-musk her beauty-spot, she is, by her natural perfume, the very heart of the scented rose. As to her little mouth, it is a sugar-plum.

"It is in her honour that the enamoured ring-dove adorns his neck with a crimson circle, for her that he tints his lips with henna, and flies to coo on the bough of the Bân tree.

"It is for her that the royal nocturnal songster, in the branches of the dark cypress, holds, invisible, his court of love and sings up and down the scale, improvising light-heartedly seventy songs in rhyme."

It was certain that such a Wonder Maiden, the fruit of some celestial mating, could pair with none other than a king, the son of kings, the issue of the bone and marrow of seven generations of sovereign lords.

So it was that the King of the Crystal Isle, after an offer of marriage had been made in his name by the wives of his chamberlains, and after the despatch of sumptuous wedding-gifts, caused his nuptials with the Maiden to be solemnised with great pomp. And the ceremonies had ended according to royal custom; when at last all the good wishes had been expressed, and every appeal for blessings had been voiced, then the Bride, a lovely image of gold in her palanquin, was borne in solemn procession to the palace.

Everything was carried out in accordance with custom. But, in truth, the parents of the Maiden had neglected one thing, and an important one, although the laws in no way exacted it. They had not consulted the good pleasure of the Bride.

That is why, when the King had penetrated into the Apartment of Mystery, at the hour appointed by the Dial of Destiny, and saw what he saw, he became deathly pale of complexion and felt the valves of his heart close up with fear. And his breast was contracted with a heavy oppression.

Indeed, instead of finding the miraculous Bride in all her radiance, he perceived her lying sobbing among the cushions; a prey to all the outward and visible signs of bitterness. But being of a magnanimous nature, and, above all, endowed with gentle manners, he approached her in all kindness, thinking the while: "There is no cause for alarm. If she weeps so, she is but doing as all young girls who have left their mother for the first time. Fortunately, the gentle oil of well-pondered words prevails over the padlock of bosoms." And he leaned tenderly over the young diademed forehead, and said:

"Oh Flame-of-Hearts, by the truth of thy grace, tell me why dost thou tarnish thus the brilliance of thy bewitching eyes? And what ails thee so to forget the presence of him whose happy destiny leads to thy charming feet?"

But the stricken damsel, on hearing these gentle words, was more suffocated by tears than ever, and completely buried her head in the cushions of grief.

And the King said to her:



There the light kiosks and belvederes serve as resting places for the exquisite spirits of the hills . . .

"Oh, mistress of my head, if these tears are for thy mother's absence, tell me, and I will, forthwith, go and fetch her, and she shall no longer leave this palace."

But as she shook her head and sobbed still more, the King said to her:

"Perhaps thou grievest for thy nurse, or thy gazelle, or thy cat, or thy peacock or thy singing-bird? Tell me, and I will myself go, this hour and instant, to fetch thee thy heart's desire."

But as he obtained nothing but a shake of the head from his sobbing Bride, he decided to seat himself a moment on the mat of reflection, and ended by saying:

"By thy life, it must, I believe, be thy regret for the house of thy childhood that oppresses thy bosom? Therefore, if thou wilt but rise from thy couch, I will go—I swear it by thy starry forehead—to dwell with thee in the home of thy infancy and there serve thee alone with my eyes."

When the weeping Maiden had heard all these words of devotion from the King, her bridegroom, her heaviness of



The bridges of ivory and turquoise are never crossed by riders, who, so as to run no risk of wearing out the precious materials, prefer to use the fords . . .

soul seemed to lift a little. At last she was able to reply, and said :

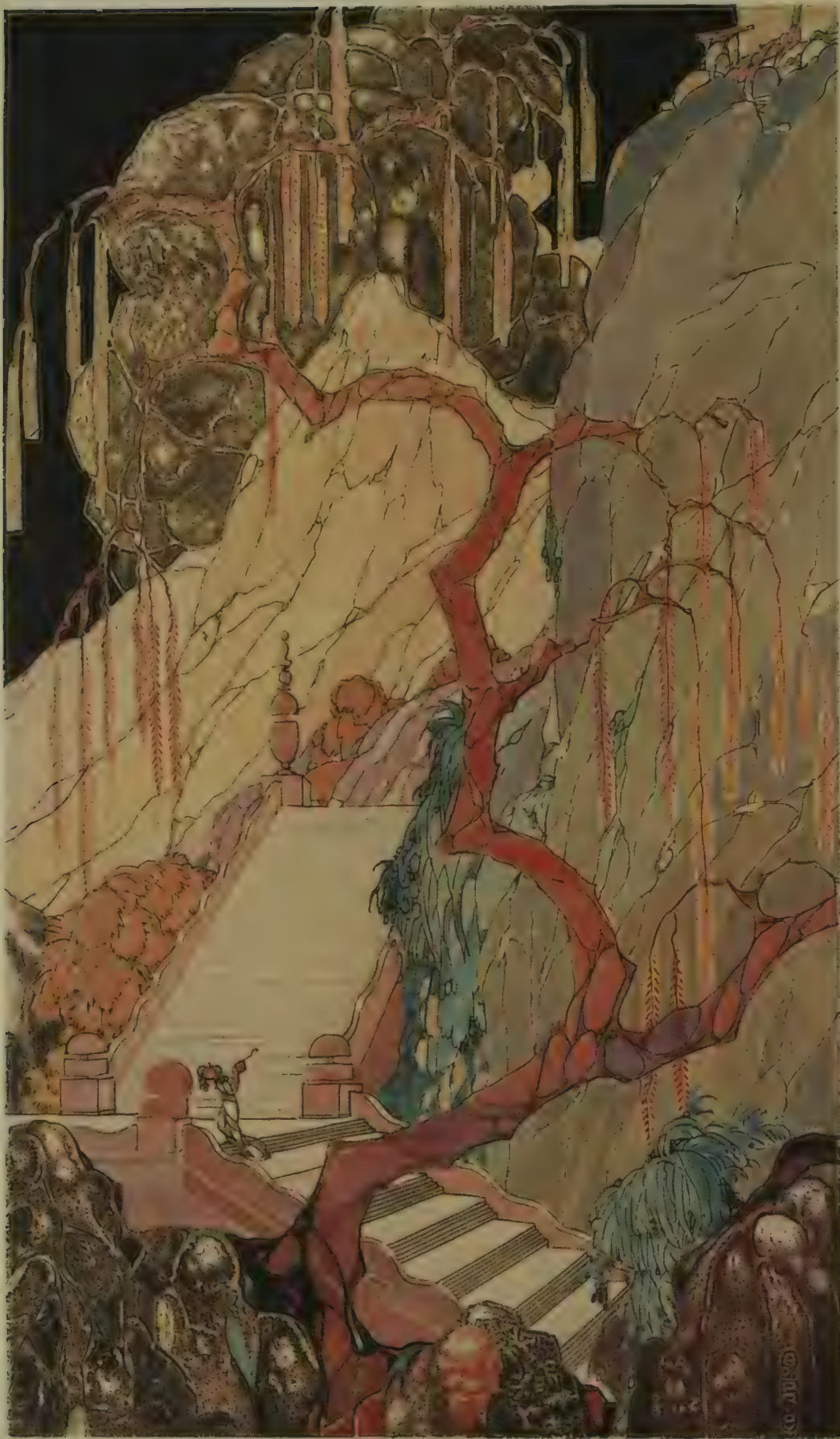
" Oh, my Lord and King, it is not for my mother, nor my nurse, nor my pets, nor the house of my childhood that I weep. I weep but for myself, frustrated and already dead."

And the King, at the extremity of emotion, cried out :
" Oh, crown of women, I see now that thy grief is nothing but the effect of the aversion inspired by the bridegroom procured for thee by fate ! "

But she replied with vivacity :—



The lords of the fighting elephants ride on the backs of their beasts, not caparisoned for war, and ready to hurl themselves with frenzy into battle, but simply to breathe the air of the mountains, seated under the shade of brocade parasols . . .



... The staircases, of porphyry and silver, which grace the prospect are only there ... to add a touch of earthly beauty to the divine sites and their landscapes.

"By thy precious life, O King of Time, far be such a motive from the thoughts of thy humble servant! But I implore thee, by thy right hand, not to force me to deliver up a secret of which my soul is not the only trustee."

However, as the King continued, with the voice of supplication, to ask her to enlighten him concerning such a strange state, the Maiden spoke and said:

"Know then, O King of Time, that the cause of my tears and of my longing for death is none other than the Sultan Love. For Love, O my King, is a plant whose roots grow only in the very substance of the heart, and to tear out a living love we must tear out the heart itself. Now the heart of thy slave, O magnanimous

King, has, ever since the days of tender childhood, been entwined with the very substance of the heart of one who holds his title of royalty by virtue of love alone. Like the angel Harout, his beauty cannot be discerned by those whose eyes see nothing but the material world, and all his riches lie in the possession of a glowing warmth within his bosom. It is a tinder whose fire illumines the inner being, and its light is visible only to those whose vision is independent of earthly sight. And the flame of that tinder is inextinguishable, for it is fed at the source which flows from the very feet of the Tree of Life. And the dwelling-place of the Master of the immortal flame is a cell of which no window opens to the outer world. And although the

cell is completely empty, yet is its inhabitant the keeper of all the treasures of the ancient kings, the Khitaian dynasties, of Khosrou and Ardeshir; and he is the Lord of the Cup of Djem and the Mirror of Alexander. For, constant vassal of the Sultan Love, he is his living witness and his respondent. And we are knit together eternally, both of us melted into love. If for a moment our bodies were to be destroyed, our ashes, by the very potency of love, would be so warm that straightway we should rise immortalised, like the Phoenix and the Rose."

When the King had heard those words he understood, as by a flash, both their apparent and their inner meaning. Straightway he rose and prostrated himself at the feet of the holy Maiden. And he remained prone for a moment, in the ecstasy of worship, forgetful of time and space, his heart a smoking censer at the Maiden's tiny feet.

When he emerged from his ecstasy, he pronounced these words:

"Rise, O my bride of a moment's dream. Calm thy beloved soul and cool thine eyes. For what mortal man is mad enough to struggle against the Sultan Love? Now I, freeing thee from the bondage of my rights over thee, adopt thee here and now as the child of my flesh and blood. And I name thee heiress in my lifetime, and after my death, of my throne and my kingdom.

"Rise, therefore, O daughter of my bones and loins, and get thee, without delay, to him who will see thee return as one who comes back from the caverns of death."

And when he had thus spoken, the King gently took the hand of the Maiden, his bride of an instant, and led her towards the secret portal of his garden. And as he opened the gates to allow her to pass through, the Maiden pressed her lips with fervour on his hand, watering it with her tears. And he, bowing to the ground, kissed the hem of her bridal robe.

After midnight, when the Maiden reached the cell whose sole outlet was a door so narrow that only a glorious unearthly body could glide through its aperture, she heard in the silence of the dawn a sobbing from within, from him who lamented for her as one laments for the dead.

She knocked on the portal, and the Voice asked from within:

"Who stands at the door?"

She replied, "It is I."

Then there was a great silence. And the narrow door did not open.

The Maiden covered her face with the veil of meditation. And without a murmur, without a sigh, she lay down on the ground, pressed close against the door.

All through that day and the following night she lay there, her head buried in the veil of meditation. And so she pondered in her heart the essential nature of Love, which demands that its Votaries should die completely to their own selves before entering into the presence of the Sultan.

With this new understanding she grew prepared once more to venture to the door, but first she rose and went to purify herself in the river. Then, with a confident step, she came back to the cell and rapped on the door.

And the Voice from within asked:

"Who is at the door?"

And this time the Maiden answered, "It is thyself."

And the door opened of its own accord.

And the rest is the Mystery of the Votaries of Love. [THE END]



"Mother, Mother!" shrieked Mary, "the kitten has spoilt my crown." Her mother whisked round on the music-stool, and saw the kitten . . . with pieces of gold paper sticking to all its paws.

THE FIRST NOWELL.

By ANGELA THIRKELL,

Author of "Wild Strawberries."

Illustrated by STEVEN SPURRIER, R.O.I.

MARY and William slept together in the night nursery. Mary was eight and William was seven, and all this happened a long time ago, when people still found it difficult to remember that "the Queen" meant Queen Alexandra and not Queen Victoria, and electric light was still an excitement. In the night nursery there was a gas-light with a white globe over it. Round the top of the globe were four large round holes, to prevent it from getting too hot and cracking, and when the gas was turned very low at night, the globe looked rather like a frightening head with eyes in it. The light was left low till Nanny came to bed and turned it out, and Mary and William were not supposed to talk after they were in bed.

It was the day before Christmas Eve, and that evening when they came down to the drawing-room after tea, for what was still called "baby-time," a terrible scene had taken place. Their mother, who had a pretty voice and was inclined to be sentimental about Christmas, had begun by singing them some carols. While she sang William had turned the waste-paper basket upside down on the kitten, and Mary had been cutting a large piece of cardboard into the shape of a crown. Her plan was to paste some gold paper on it and be the fairy queen.

"Mother," said Mary, the very minute her mother had finished singing, "please can I have the paste and a safety-pin?"

Her mother, who had rather hoped that one of the children would ask for another carol, found the paste for her.

"If you are going to paste, you must have some brown paper, Mary," she said, "or everything will get in a mess. Wait a minute and I'll get you some, and find you a safety-pin."

"Do you like carols?" said William, as soon as his mother had gone out of the room. Mary shook her head very hard, while she cut her gold paper to fit her crown.

"Let's have a Society against carols," she said.

"How shall we have it?" asked William, who rather admired Mary and always imitated her when he could.

"Oh, just have it," said Mary. And then their mother came back with a safety-pin and a large piece of brown paper, which she spread on the floor. Mary said, "Thank you," and began to put the paste on the gold paper.

"Now," said their mother, sitting down to the piano, "come and I'll help you to learn this carol, so that we can sing it on Christmas Eve."

William looked anxiously at Mary to see how she would take this attack on the Society's rights, but, as she obediently got up and went to the piano, he followed her example.

"Now," said their mother, "I am going to sing it to you once, and then we will try it together."

"The first Nowell the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay."

When she had finished the first verse there was dead silence, except for the noise of the kitten scrabbling about under the waste-paper basket.

"Oh, let the poor kitten out, William," said his mother. So he took the waste-paper basket off it, and it ran at him and embraced one of his legs with spiky paws.

"Now," said his mother—

"The first Nowell the angels did say . . ."

"Mother," said William, "I can't sing, because the kitten is clawing my legs so."

"Then give it to me," said the children's father, who was reading a book on the sofa after coming back from the office. So William unhooked the kitten from his socks and gave it to his father.

"Now," said his mother, "sing with me—"

"The first Nowell . . ."

"Go on," said his mother.

"I've got something in me that doesn't let me sing," said William complainingly.

"What is it?" asked his mother. "A sore throat?"

"No. A Society."

"Well," said his mother, who didn't quite understand what he said, "I'll sing it to you once more, and then I expect you'll do it quite easily."

"The first Nowell . . ."

"Mother, mother!" shrieked Mary, "the kitten has spoilt my crown." Her mother whisked round on the music-stool and saw the kitten, which had escaped from the children's father, dancing madly with rage, with pieces of gold paper sticking to all its paws. Mary tried to catch

it, but it retreated backwards under the sofa, where it could be heard continuing its dance of fury.

"Well, never mind, Mary," said her mother, "you shall have some more gold paper. Now come and help William to sing the carol."

Mary had a sweet, piping voice and a good ear, but, since she had founded the Society, pride forbade her to use them.

"The first Nowell, the angels did say," she recited in a monotone, with a set, sulky face.

"That's better," said her mother, with forced cheerfulness. "Now, both together."

"The first Nowell—angels did say——" sang Mary, rather more sulkily than before, and all on one note.

"And now William," said his mother.

"But I told you I can't, mother," said William, "because of that Society in my throat."

"If you really have something in your throat," said his mother anxiously, "you had better have some hot milk when you go to bed. Mary must sing it herself, then. Now, once more, Mary!"

"First Nowell—angels say——" intoned Mary, even more disagreeably than before. And then she began to cry.

At the same moment the kitten, which had got rid of most of the gold paper, came prancing out sideways from under the sofa, put both arms round William's right ankle, and clawed and bit him with all its might. William screamed. Their father rang the bell, and Nanny came in. In a moment she had collected William from the kitten, put the remains of Mary's crown into the waste-paper basket, told the children to say good-night nicely, and whisked them upstairs. Then with efficient celerity she undressed them, bathed them, pushed them into their flannel night-gowns, red flannel dressing-gowns and red bed-room slippers, set them in chairs at the nursery table, and left them to eat their biscuits and milk while she emptied the bath water.

"Why did you sing the carol?" asked William, biting all the little battlements off his Petit Beurre biscuit before attacking it seriously.

"Well, I sang it as horridly as I could," said Mary.

"I didn't sing at all," said William, in a conceited voice. "I ought to be the chief in the Society."

"You can't," said Mary, "because I'm older than you."

"Well, I shall have another Society of my own to be chief of then," said William.

This open act of rebellion so flabbergasted Mary that all she could say was, "All right, wait till you're in bed."

And no sooner had Nanny tucked them up in bed and turned the gas very low, and gone downstairs to get her supper, than Mary began to say in a horrible, deep voice: "Sheets on your head, blankets on your head; sheets on your head, blankets on your head!"

Nobody knew why these words frightened William so dreadfully, but they did, and Mary knew it well; and as William was too frightened to tell Mother or Nanny, they gave her great power over him.

"No, don't, Mary!" he said piteously, in a muffled voice, because he was right under the bedclothes, trying to be safe.

But Mary went on saying "Sheets on your head, blankets on your head," till William cried so loud that Nanny came crossly up from the kitchen, where she was having bread and cheese and pickles, and a delightful talk with cook and Sarah, and told them to be quiet. William was so exhausted with terror that he went to sleep at once, but Mary lay awake thinking. First she thought how silly William was, and then how very un-understanding grown-ups were to expect one to sing carols. Of course one couldn't disobey them, but one could sing in a cross, sulky way which would make them wish they had never thought of it, and this Mary was determined to do for ever and ever. And one could say to oneself all the time, "I am the chief of the Society for not singing carols." So she lay warmly in bed, getting happier and happier with her wicked thoughts, as one so often does.

Just as she was nearly asleep, she heard voices in the street outside. The night-nursery windows were tightly shut, for winters were winters in those days, and the pipes froze, and there were frost flowers on the window-panes, and Nanny wouldn't have any nonsense about fresh air. But through the cracks and crevices Mary could hear mutterings and grumbings and shufflings, and then suddenly there burst upon the still night the loveliest sounds that Mary had ever heard. So lovely they were that her heart melted and tears began to well up in her eyes. And when I tell you that the noise was a German band, with peaked caps and military jackets and brass instruments, those of you who remember German bands will know exactly how beautiful the noise was. To Mary it was like all the hymns that Nanny used to sing to them after tea on winter Sundays come true. It was like—

"Hark, hark, my soul, angelic songs are swelling,"

and

"They stand, those halls of Sion,
All jubilant with song";

and she was transported to another world, and she cried and cried with happiness while William lay tightly asleep. The tune the band was playing was

"The first Nowell the angels did say,"

and when you remember how the cornet was never quite in tune, and how the trombone was always a little flat, besides only playing two notes as accompaniment to all melodies, you will realise how romantically and exquisitely beautiful it was. Mary knew that she had miraculously become quite good, and would be good for ever, and sing carols as often as her mother asked her to, and even stop frightening William in bed.

Then the band played "The Mistletoe Bough," and when the last lovely discords had died away, Mary began to cry more loudly than ever, till William woke up and began to cry too. So then Nanny came up from



And when I tell you that the noise was a German band, with peaked caps and military jackets and brass instruments, those of you who remember German bands will know exactly how beautiful the noise was.

the kitchen again, and asked them what they were making that noise for; but by this time neither of them knew, so Nanny punched their pillows and said she would tell their mother if it happened again, and then she went to bed, and they all went to sleep.

All next day, which was Christmas Eve, Mary was very good. Mother and Nannie didn't notice how good she was, because she and William had a quarrel as to which of them a small wooden doll, which their father had cut out of a piece of firewood, belonged to. But as it was well known to be Mary's doll, except on Sundays when it was William's, the quarrel was all William's fault, though, owing to the great injustice of grown-ups, Mary was told to let him have it, because it was Christmas Eve. After this very unfair decision had been made, Mary did not feel quite so good, but that was not her fault.

After tea they went down to the drawing-room as usual. Mary was still full of romantic ecstasy about carols, and spoke quite unkindly to William when he mentioned the Society.

"Now, as it is Christmas Eve we will sing the carol," said their mother, sitting down at the piano.

"The first Nowell the angels did say," she sang.

William, much perplexed, looked to Mary for guidance, but even as her mother sang the first lines her heart hardened again, and she became a backslider from grace.

"I can't sing, Mother, because I still have that Society in my throat," said William, looking quite angelic.

"Mary, then," said their mother. Mary twisted her body about and stood lumpishly on one leg.

"First blubble—angels blub——" she mumbled, darkly and savagely.

"Very well," said her mother, in a bright, patient voice, "we will play Halma" (for people still played Halma in those days). So they played Halma, and William kept his temper when he won, and lost it when Mary won. So then they stopped playing Halma, and their mother helped Mary to cut out a new crown and paste gold paper on to it, and fasten the ends together with a paper-fastener, which was really much better than a safety-pin, while William played with the kitten and helped it to run after its own tail. But even though Mary was now a fairy queen, with blue eyes and golden hair (for that is what a crown does for you), and more beautiful than anyone in the world, she could not feel really happy, because of having been so cross and sulky about the carols, and the impossibility of saying one was sorry. So she went to bed rather unhappily, and didn't even answer William back when he said the wooden doll would be his till Boxing Day.

When they were in bed, Nanny took a clean stocking of Mary's and a clean sock of William's from the drawer, and pinned them both to the end of the children's beds. Mary and William knew from past experience that during the night the stockings would become fat and bulging with presents, though they had never been able to stay awake long enough to see it happen.

"Don't let's go to sleep, Mary," said William, when Nanny had turned down the gas.

So they kept anxiously awake for at least ten minutes, and though the German band came and played more beautifully than ever, neither of them heard it. However, their father and mother gave it a shilling to go away.

Early next morning, in the cold darkness, Mary woke up and remembered Christmas Day. With a beating heart she felt for her stocking, unpinned it, and drew it towards her. It was fat and heavy, bulging in places, crackling with tissue paper, shapeless, full of promise.

"William," she whispered in a loud voice, "wake up, it's Christmas."

William woke up obediently, and found his sock bulging as much as Mary's stocking.

"Mother said we could bring them to her room," said Mary. "Come on."

She and William put on their red flannel dressing-gowns and their red bedroom slippers. Luckily Nanny, though she said she never closed an eye all night, never woke before seven o'clock, whatever happened, so she did not hear them creep through the cold darkness to their mother's door.

"Now we shall sing carols," said Mary, and in her sweet, piping voice, she sang "The First Nowell" all through. William was so surprised,



Luckily Nanny, though she said she never closed an eye all night . . . did not hear them creep through the cold darkness to their mother's door.

besides not knowing many of the words, that he didn't join in at all. When she had finished, she banged on her mother's door.

"What is it? Come in," said a rather frightened voice from inside.

They went in, as their mother was striking a match, and lighting the candle by her bed.

"Happy Christmas!" they both shouted.

"Happy Christmas, darlings," said their mother. "But it is only half-past five. Can't you go to bed again for a little?"

"It's too cold," said William miserably.

Then their father shouted from the next room something about not making all that noise in the middle of the night; so they both got quickly into their mother's bed and she blew the candle out. Mary sang "The First Nowell" all through three times. At first her mother nearly cried with pleasure, and then she nearly cried with tiredness, because to be woken up at half-past five and have your little girl singing and your little boy kicking you with his red bedroom slippers is far from restful. At last however they all went uncomfortably to sleep, and didn't wake up till it was really time to look at the stockings.

It was a very happy and successful Christmas, except for everyone being so tired, owing to waking up so early, and William throwing the wooden doll into the fire because Mary said it was hers now. But the doll was rescued and put away till they could both behave better.

When they were safely in bed, William said, "Now I shall sing carols," and he began to sing "The First Nowell"!

"You can't," said Mary, interrupting him, "it's against the Society."

"I don't care," said William, "I am the chief of the Society that does sing carols."

"Well, you can't," said Mary, "because I belong to that Society too, and I shall be the chief."

So they both sang at the tops of their voices, and as their father and mother were out to dinner, and Nanny was in the kitchen having cold turkey and piccalilli and cheese with cook and Sarah, they sang and sang, till quite suddenly they both went to sleep.

While Mary was asleep, she had a ridiculous dream. She was a grown-up lady, though she still had short hair, and she was in the drawing-room. But the drawing-room looked funny and different, as things do in dreams. The wall-paper with its flowers and fruit had gone, and the walls were painted a kind of shiny yellow. Everything looked very empty, and there were only two or three pictures, which looked very like the pictures William did in the nursery with his coloured chalks, only they were larger and had frames. There was a new sofa, very large and squashy, and some very comfortable, enormous arm-chairs, and by the sofa was a little table with bottles and shining glasses on it.

It was all very pleasant, and Mary was quite happy to sit by the fire and see what would happen. Presently the door opened and a man came in.

"Hullo, darling!" said the man, "are the children back?"

"No," said Mary, who couldn't see any children about.

"I wish they were," said the man, "it's getting so horridly foggy. But they'll be all right with William. What's on now?"

"I don't know," said Mary truthfully.

The man went over to a large cabinet and touched it. Immediately music filled the room.

"Christmas Eve service, I suppose," said the man. "Shall I turn it off?"

"No thank you," said Mary. "If it is a service, there might be some carols."

"Very well, darling," said the man. "Have a drink?"

Mary liked milk, and she liked lemonade, but before she could think which she wanted, there was a rumpus and a racket on the stairs, and two children came bursting in, followed by a tall young man.

"Hullo, William!" said the first man, "had a good time? The twins been good?"

"Good as gold," said William, and came over and kissed Mary.

Mary was delighted to see William, whom she at once recognised to be himself, though he was six feet high, and had a moustache, instead of being seven and wearing knickerbockers. But dreams are like that.

"What have you been doing," she said to the two children.

"Oh, it was lovely, Mother," said the girl twin. "Uncle William took us to the Trocadero for lunch, and we ordered our own lunches, and then it was a surprise where we were to go."

"I wasn't surprised," said the boy twin, "because I saw the tickets, and they said 'Regency Theatre,' so I knew it was 'Time, Please, Ladies.'"

"Well, I was," said the girl. "It was a marvellous play, Mother; all about a girl who was married to a man, but she didn't know who he was, and she had twenty sisters, and he had twenty brothers, and they danced too marvellously, and they all went to see the Schneider Cup, and to Lord's and the Test Match, and a mannequin show, and then they all got married. And, Mother, the heroine's name was Molly, like me. I would simply love to take her part when I'm grown up."

"How lovely," said Mary, who had never seen a musical comedy, and thought it all sounded very romantic and exciting.

"And did you like it, Bill?" said the man.

"There was a funny man," said Bill, in a hoarse, happy voice. "His trousers were too long, and they flapped about on the floor, and he fell over the ends. I'd love to have trousers like that. Oh, he did marvellous tap-dancing. Daddy, can I learn tap-dancing?"

"It would do him a lot of good," said William. "Make him pick his feet up, and not kick his old uncle's shins at the exciting parts."

"Oh, Uncle William, I didn't kick you."

"Oh, nephew Bill, you did. Mary, that child of yours and Peter's is a pest to society. Whenever he was amused he rocked himself backwards and forwards in his seat till the whole row shook, and hit me with his arms and legs, and everyone glared at us."

"Mother," said Molly, "Uncle William has promised to take us to see the Mills Brothers and Sophie Tucker after Christmas. Won't it be lovely?"

"Is that all right, William?" said Peter, which seemed to be their father's name, rather anxiously.

"May have to book tickets a day or two beforehand," said William.

"Yes, but I mean, is it all right—Sophie Tucker, I mean?"

"Oh, Daddy," said Molly, "we've got heaps of Sophie Tucker records."

"What does Sophie Tucker do?" asked Mary.

"Sings songs, darling," said William. "Behind the times, as usual."

"How nice," said Mary.

"Well, how's art?" said Peter to William.

"Not doing too badly. I've cleared out about three-quarters of my show at the Chalk Galleries. I must say you've got the pick, though. Whenever I look at those three of mine you've got here, I could curse myself for letting you have them as a wedding present. It was a case of necessity. I hadn't got a penny to spend on a wedding present then. Now I suppose you could sell them for about fifty quid each. It'll be a hundred next year."

"Where is the picture you were doing of the rocking-horse?" said Mary, who remembered that two days ago William had been working very hard on a portrait of that animal, and had sucked so much chalk that Nannie had been angry.

"Do you remember the old rocking-horse?" said William. "It seems to me only yesterday that I was lying on my stomach on the nursery floor trying to draw him. And do you remember how I got my mouth all purple and green with sucking chalks, and how angry Nanny was?"

"It was the day before yesterday," said Mary, who was always very precise. William laughed.

"Rather a good definition of our childhood," he said.

Mary was puzzled, but dreams are puzzling, so she accepted the remark. When you know you will wake up before long, it is hardly worth bothering.

"Daddy," said Molly, "what's on the wireless now?"

"Christmas Eve service. Your mother thought she'd like to hear some carols."

"Oh, I know heaps of carols," said Molly. "We do them at school with folk-dancing. But that's only for the lower school. Next term, thank goodness, we won't have any more of that kids' rubbish."

"I know an awfully good carol," said Billy, "shall I sing it?"

"If you must," said William.

Billy looked into the far distance, and sang untunefully in his hoarse voice—

"A pocket full of money,
A cellar full of beer,
A merry, merry Christmas,
And a happy New Year."

Mary began to laugh. It was last Christmas that she and William had heard the mummings sing that song at their grandmother's house in the country, and Nannie had been cross with them for singing it in the nursery afterwards, because it was about beer, which was vulgar.

"Did you hear the mummings sing that song?" she asked Billy.

Billy looked perplexed. "No, I didn't hear you sing it, Mummy," he said. "It was cook's old aunt, the day we had tea in the kitchen last year at Granny's."

"I know a much better carol," said Molly. "Good King Wenceslas. There's a ripping record of it—Savoy

Band, I think—with all the carols done in jazz time. You ought to get it, Daddy."

"Do you remember how we sang carols?" said William to Mary.

"Of course I do."

"I sang them rather nicely, but you were as obstinate as you could be. It

serves you right to have children who prefer musical comedies and jazz."

"Oh, William," said Mary, much distressed. "I *did* sing carols. I sang 'The First Nowell' ever so many times on Christmas morning."

"Well, anyway," said William, who enjoyed teasing his sister, "I was the chief of the Society that does sing carols, so I must have sung them."

"But I did sing 'The First Nowell,'" said Mary, who was nearly crying. "I sang it in Mother's bed this morning."

"We weren't in Mother's bed," said William, who seemed, through Mary's tearful eyes, to be dim and far away. "It was Molly and Billy that were in your bed this morning, singing 'Wagon Wheels.' Well, good-bye, everyone, I must be getting along now."

His voice died away. The room became larger and larger as he walked towards the door. Mary tried to call to him to make him understand about the carols, but no one heard her voice. Molly and Billy had put on a gramophone record from the musical comedy they had heard that afternoon. The music from the wireless swelled louder and louder, and the tune of "The First Nowell" surged up and overpowered the syncopated measures of "Time, Please, Ladies!" Mary felt that the clamour was holding her down, and drowning her.

"William, William," she called, unable even to hear her own voice; and then, final appeal of the nightmare-stricken: "Mother, Mother!"

As she woke the last strains of the German band were dying away in the cold street below. By the low gas-light she could see William fast asleep in the bed next to hers. All danger past, she burrowed herself farther into the bedclothes, and went safely to sleep again.

[THE END]



While Mary was asleep, she had a ridiculous dream. She was a grown-up lady, though she still had short hair, and she was in the drawing-room.

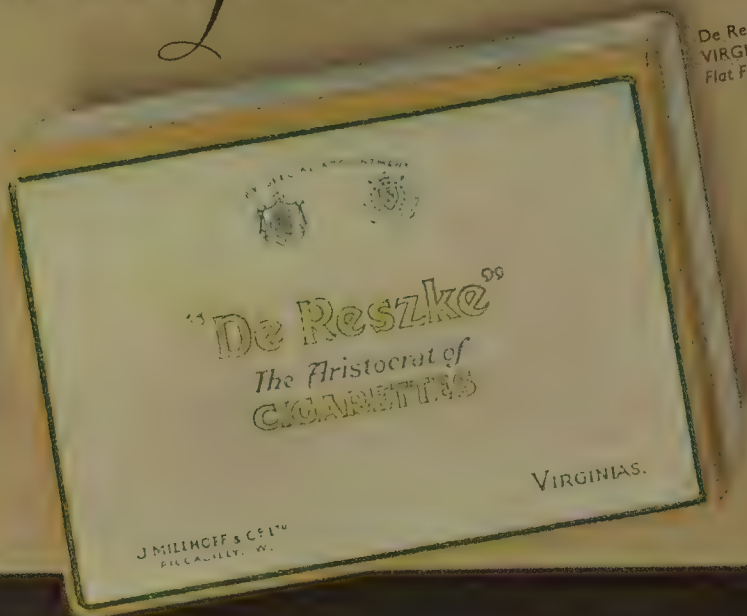


If no one ever marries me!—
And I don't know why they should;

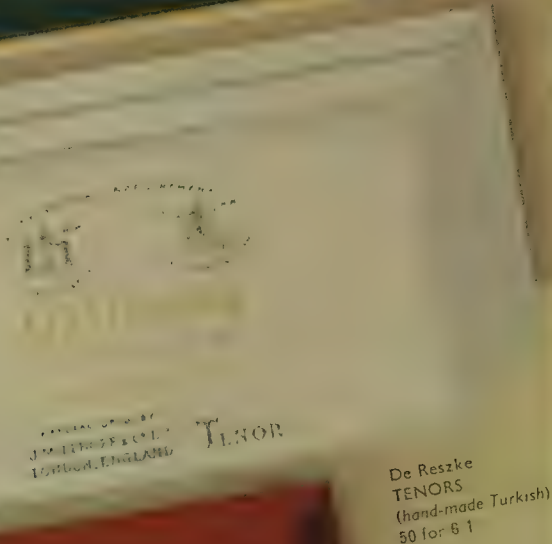
As Dad says I'm not pretty,
And I'm seldom very good.

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Tin Soldiers for the Christmas Fray: Aztecs and Spaniards.



Tin Soldiers for the Christmas Fray: Napoleon's and Wellington's Men.



FROM the Spanish conquest of Mexico, recalled by the tin soldiers illustrated in colour on the preceding page, we now turn to equally attractive examples of cavalymen—English and French—such as fought in the Napoleonic wars. These again are derived from M. Paul Armont's collection of historical tin soldiers. The figures in the first three rows represent various regiments of British cavalry that fought at Waterloo in 1815. The top row shows (left to right) the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Dragoon Guards respectively. In the second row the first three figures are 1st Life Guards; the fourth, 2nd Life Guards; and the last, 7th Dragoons. In the third row the first three are 1st Dragoon Guards and the last two, Horse Guards. The other figures represent French light cavalry regiments. The fourth row shows respectively (left to right) men of the 1st, 4th, 7th, and 6th French regiments of Hussars, 1811-1815. In the fifth row (on the left) is a man of the 1st Regiment of Polish Light Horse, 1808-1814; the other two belong to the French 2nd Regiment of *Cheveau-Légers Lanciers*, or Red Lancers, 1810-1815. These three are in full-dress uniform. The bottom row shows men of the French 2nd Regiment, in uniform worn at the battle of Moscow in 1812. All these types of the period have a special appeal since the recent revival of interest in Napoleon.



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Gilbert Cousland

Here's to a good Flip!

Miss Dorothy Dickson and Mr. John Tilley
talking it over with Mr. Richard Pearse, the well-known Pilot at Heston Airport.



She came back holding the book behind her, a finger between the pages.

Christmas is a Heavy Time for Postmen.

By EARDLEY BESWICK,
Author of "Original Design."

Illustrated by W. R. S. STOTT.

"Only when the way is unpleasant is the arrival fully assured."

—(Bhulistan proverb; translated by Gordon Leycester.)

TO the north of Bhulistan is a mountain long reputed unclimbable. The Croasdale Expedition climbed it in 1932. When Evelyn Leycester was a little girl, with straight hair that was perpetually being brushed widdershins by a nana in the ill-founded hope that it might thereby one day curl naturally, her uncle, Gordon Leycester, journeying in the Far East, strayed fortuitously into Bhulistan. He had meant to travel further, but the Bhulistanese customs proved so novel, their language so disconcertingly unrelated to those of the neighbour States, that he scented an ethnological mystery. At that time Professor of Oriental Studies at a newly-founded university, he found in Bhulistan much to fascinate both the man and the scholar in him, material for a book that was to put the newly-founded university on the map in the matter of Oriental studies, and a friend in Ratak Lat, who was Amil's father.

It was he who persuaded Ratak Lat to send his son to England, for not even his own overdose of Western education had persuaded Gordon to despise it, and, being a man who thought imperially long before that became the fashion, he had conceived the idea that Bhulistan might one day possess importance.

So a few years later, when Evelyn was eight, and the nana had turned overnight into a French governess, and Gordon's book had won him esteem even at the India Office, Amil was transported to Penang, and thence by P. and O. to Tilbury. Here Gordon met him, and further transported him to Hathern, where the Reverend Hubert Mellish diligently prepared him for the more robust life of Pontifex. In due course he became entitled, by the lapse of time rather than by any noteworthy endeavour of his own, to wear an Old Pomponian tie, and, after a little wire-pulling by the India Office—for of Occidental learning he still possessed less than the rudiments—he went on to Oxford.

He was an undersized, yellowish youngster, reminiscent of a rook-squab, when Evelyn first knew him, Uncle Gordon having dumped him for the holidays; very shy, but with good-humoured, lazy eyes above his Mongolian cheekbones, and sleek black hair growing low over an old-ivory forehead. Older in years than Evelyn, in intelligence he excelled him, which made them excellent playmates. They rode bicycles together, falling off and barking their knees with precisely similar effect. This seemed to prove their differences no more than skin-deep, a conclusion of importance to Amil, for, at Hubert Mellish's, he was for ever being reminded that he was the son of a king, and Evelyn, if his superior in almost everything else, was not by any means a king's daughter. Probably the only real happiness in all the stoical little Oriental's English experience was that of his holidays with Evelyn, for he was not clever enough, nor, despite his wealth, assertive enough, to be esteemed for his own sake elsewhere. He failed inexplicably at cricket, much to the Reverend Hubert's disappointment, and proved quite incapable of the learning that is the resource of those denied distinction at games. Even at Oxford, therefore, he was a nonentity. At squash, however, he developed a sub-professional brilliance, and he made a vivid collection of postage stamps.

In his second year at Oxford, at a stage when he was beginning to interest the sort of woman capable of discerning quite fabulously vicious propensities in his innocent but Oriental eyes, he was fortunate to be whisked back to Bhulistan, where the death of Ratak Lat had created the vacancy for which Oxford had been intended to prepare him. Evelyn never saw him again, though she wrote him three quite long letters, and

one quite short one that does not properly come into this narrative until later. Besides, he and Evelyn had never been more than tolerant companions, and even up to the time he departed to mount the throne of Bhulistan and marry three separate little yellow wives, he had remained uninterested in Englishwomen, as women. By his standards their beauties were unfeminine, though he admired the mouths that were then becoming fashionable. They reminded him, nostalgically, of the betel-stained lips of his father's harim, only they looked, he said, even more beautiful, "like stab-wounds after they begin to swell." But in Evelyn's so far unfarded features he discerned no more of allure than did she in his flat, yellow face. This, of course, made it all the easier for them to be friends, and, as in all England she was the only feminine being with whom he had been able to feel comfortable, she remained uniquely unforgotten in the excitements of his kingship and his trigamy. He also remembered squash and the three-halfpenny postage.

Things never did go very smoothly for poor Evelyn Leycester—at least, not until years later. It was just about the time that she was beginning quite to like Everard Croasdale that he began to climb mountains, so that they saw one another only at the tail ends of vacations, when he and Tony Ilmingham and the Foster boys were squeezing-in visits after weeks of strenuous adventure on Alps and Pyrenees and Dolomites. Then she would listen to them talking, a more than adult seriousness in their youthful eyes, teeth biting hard on heavy pipe-stems, of cols and crevasses, of traverses, *arêtes*, and glissades—the whole lovely jargon of the craft. Evelyn adored it. She had even climbed a little herself in Switzerland, and performed some useful scrambles beyond Wasdale Head, and she appreciated their enthusiasm for something she knew to be clean and fine and hardy.

It was Everard who first got serious about the Everest business. Even for a young man he took long views. In his opinion the thing could only be done by fellows who trained for it not over one year or two years, but over at least five; fellows like himself and Tony and the Foster boys, young enough to devote the next few years to an unsparing preparation of minds and muscles, of hearts and lungs, of nerves and temperaments. He broached his idea the night before term, and, like good Europeans, they sat up until they had made a five-years' programme. Evelyn was in at it, and she was tremendously and sympathetically excited, albeit a little sick feeling afflicted her chest—too much of that pastry at dinner, she told herself, ashamed of pastry in the aura of these hard-trained young mountain-conquerors.

Pup Foster, the younger of the brothers, of course, said they really ought to do some Himalayan climbs before tackling Everest; make, say, three expeditions of it, selecting peaks in order of difficulty, so as to bring accumulated experience to bear on the final task.

Everard acclaimed it as a sound thought. These shows took a lot of preparing, and strings had to be pulled before you could even start. People would pull strings for you when you had shown them you were capable of going through with it. Had they any books about the country in Evelyn's house?

It was then that she thought of Amil for the first time in a whole year. "I know," she cried, "go to Bhulistan and put up with Amil—of course I know that Bhulistan isn't Himalayas, Pup!—Amil'd be overjoyed to see you, and there wouldn't be any need to pull strings, since he's king of the place. Yes, of course I've got Uncle Gordon's book, Everard."

"Go and get it, girl," he commanded.

"But are there any climbs in Bhulistan?" asked Tony.

All right, all right! I'm going for it, Everard. Climbs? Why, I remember Amil telling me about a mountain no one could climb. He said it was guarded by devils."

"They say that about Everest. Hurry up, there's a good, girl. I want to read Gordon Leycester on the climbing there."

"Gordon Leycester, my dear ass, is an ethnologist and a philologist, not an Alpinist."

The slam of a door shut Evelyn off from the noise of their dispute. She came back holding the book behind her, a finger between the pages.

"I'm going to read this, Everard," she insisted, "because it'll take you hours to find it if I shut the book. Uncle Gordon wasn't very strong at indexes when he wrote this." She slumped untidily into a chair and ran her finger down the page. "'Houanghari,'" she read, "'(21,000 feet), the chief mountain, is the subject of a number of characteristic legends—footnote: see Appendix G. Elemental Gods. Although reputed to be 22 days, about 250 miles, from the capital, its snowy peaks can be seen from great distances and seem to dominate the country. It is widely believed to be unclimbable, not, so far as I could gather, from any supreme difficulty existing in its snowy slopes, but because of the jealous guardianship of the god Jat whose home it is.'"

They studied a map and decided that Houanghari was far enough south to make climbing possible many months earlier than in the Himalayas.

"Houanghari and the great god Jat for me next year!" declared Everard, as if it were a challenge. The rest chorused agreement, all except Evelyn. She felt woefully out of it, and continued to revile the undigested pastry below her chest.

Actually, it was almost two years before they visited Bhulistan, where a delighted Amil received them royally. He had nearly forgotten his English, though he still possessed a dinner suit, in spite of which he received them in an emerald-green *panaung* that half-hid his high, supple boots with their soft white soles. Above all this he had a little purple jacket much braided with gold. His brown eyes shone with enthusiasm, and in more than one sense he was clearly twice the man they had known at Oxford. On the subject of climbing Houanghari he was at first a little solemn. "It . . . is . . . very . . . dangerous," he said, a word at a time, and then, as if he feared to be laughed at: "But what larks . . . to . . . make . . . old Jat angry! It . . . will . . . teach . . . my people that all . . . these . . . superstitions are . . ."—he paused gravely for a phrase—"jolly piffle!" he exclaimed, obviously pleased at having found it.

Next day, when they had admired the pagoda-esque construction of his palace and its interior opulence, he took them sight-seeing among the shy little bamboo houses of his people. Before one of these he grouped them fussily. It bore upon its slender wall an aggressive-looking metal box, painted crimson, and ornamented with a wide slot and a white enamelled plate for purposes unmistakable by any Englishman. While they marvelled, there came to the doorway a fat little yellowish man in a uniform of rough blue serge with red facings. He had twinkling black eyes under the polished peak of an absurd flat cap, again of blue serge red-braided. The trousers wrinkled incongruously over his native footwear, and about his shoulders was slung a canvas bag.

"Altouang, my Postmaster-General," Amil announced.

The little man salaamed and grinned engagingly.

Everard broke out with: "Good heavens, you don't mean to say that you have a postal service out here!"

"This is it," Amil assured him proudly. "Very efficient. Very European. I hope you post many letters. They get there safely, no fear, eh? Altouang is a splendid feller, and sells many stamps. We send them all over the world."

He led them inside, the Postmaster-General salaaming absurdly before them as they went. An elaborate brass grille divided the mahogany counter, and there was a piece of withered blotting-paper, a dried-up ink-well, and a corroded pen-holder. Altouang displayed sheets of gaudy stamps for their inspection. It occurred to them simultaneously that Amil must do a good trade supplying schoolboy collectors all over the world, as he had boasted. In the afternoon, they all bought stamps and posted letters, half the community turning out to witness this favourite European pastime. It was almost the occasion for a festival.

While they waited for the experienced bearers that friends in the Northern

Provinces were collecting for them, they kept fit by playing squash. All the youth of the place played it with a skill that was disconcerting. Amil no longer played. Fat, and no longer the best player in Bhulistan, he regretfully found it necessary to conserve his dignity. The four were in hard training when they finally took their way northward, riding little Shan ponies, and heading for the gleam of Houanghari in the northern skies.

Meanwhile, Evelyn Leycester continued to find life an awkward business. Reluctantly she came out, but with distinction, for she had grown into beauty since the days when she used to compare knee-wounds with Amil. Coming out was relatively an expensive matter, and shares were toppling in the slump, dividends shrinking, the modest Leycester fortunes vanishing like spring snow. She submitted, while deploring the effort necessary to equip her for the sort of future to which her looks and birth were supposed to entitle her, and when young Gore-Parsons, a completely gilded youth, began to take an interest in her, she felt, for the first time in her life, frightened. Too sensible for melodrama, she could not help feeling that there was, after all, something rather vital at stake; and so far she had no understanding with Everard. They were too assured friends for anything like that to happen, she feared, and began seriously to wish she could like the Parsons youth, if only for her parents' sake, a well-worn but none the less recurrent situation.

She let the situation drift until October, when, in the course of a Christmas letter to Everard, she casually mentioned that the Gore-Parsons he had known at Oxford wanted to marry her, and that, not knowing what to do about it, she would welcome the advice of so old a friend. Then she postponed her decision for six months, and resigned herself to wondering if and when her letter would reach Everard. Her final inspiration had been to enclose it with one to Amil that, sentimentally, adjured him



It bore upon its slender wall an aggressive-looking metal box, painted crimson. . . . While they marvelled, there came to the doorway a fat little yellowish man in a uniform of rough blue serge with red facings.

to see that it reached the expedition precisely on Christmas Day. At all that distance it was impossible for her to realise the magnitude of her request. Though she knew that there was no regular post to Bhulistan, so that such letters as might, since Uncle Gordon's day, be directed there must wait at the coast until someone happened to be travelling that way, of Postmaster-General Altouang she knew nothing whatever. Still, she had confidence in the endurance of Amil's friendship, and she was strong on the point that English people really did like to hear from their friends on Christmas Day.

As it happened, her letter was lucky at the coast, but even then it had a leisurely journey, and it was not until the sixth day of December that Altouang received an urgent command to appear in his official capacity at the palace. He changed into his braided uniform—he wore native dress except for official occasions—and, hanging his empty satchel about his fat shoulders, sought the presence-chamber.

Amil was peremptory. The efficiency of his postal service was under the scrutiny of Europe. A letter of the most exemplary importance must be delivered to the white man on the nineteenth day thereafter. He would post it himself that afternoon. Altouang salaamed and departed. Later in the day, Amil, with a complete retinue, visited his G.P.O., bought a gaudy stamp, and solemnly affixed it to Evelyn's letter. Then he took it outside and, encouraged by the applause of his people, pushed it through the crimson slot. Behind the scenes, Altouang rescued the letter from a swarm of ants, laid it reverently on the counter, and banged it with a date-stamp that recorded an error of rather more than three years. Then he prepared for travel. He, Altouang, Postmaster-General of Bhulistan, who never had journeyed more than ten miles from the capital, was setting out for fabulous Houanghari, some 250 uphill miles away, through forests where ten miles is a stiff day's journeying. The entire population saw him depart, very serious, riding a sedate little Shan pony, his canvas post-bag on his back.

By Christmas Eve, the expedition had succeeded in establishing Camp 3 at the head of a wide ice-field, deceptively quilted with snow. So far it had been largely a question of choosing a route, and the climbing more in the nature of a preparation than a serious test. Higher up it had been snowing, and the heavy clouds were a pall between them and the sky. Over the camp towered an icy precipice patched with naked rock, and the black, warring clouds about its crest confirmed the distant rumbling of avalanches to insist that Camp 3 was the limit to which the wiry Bhutanese porters might be expected to adventure. Already they showed a fearful tendency to do homage to the great god Jat, and Everard realised that henceforth it was a white man's job, and determined to lose not an hour in undertaking it. The weather was distinctly less promising than they had been led to expect, and he feared the least delay would reduce their chance. Normally he would have had them ease up on Christmas Day, but he realised they would be better climbing than hanging about a wind-swept camp getting on one another's nerves. He had already reconnoitred the face behind them, and selected a route that seemed practicable. That night he felt as a sort of zero hour, and his bearded jaw was set sternly as he wriggled into his sleeping-bag for warmth a little before sunset. The porters still chattered wanly about a Primus stove, and they were uneasy as well as cold, for they heard Jat complaining in his fastnesses.

The porters were so intent next morning in watching the ascent of four tiny, roped figures that clung like flies to the icy face that they were slow to observe the approach, across the icefield, of a new-comer, a little figure in postman's uniform, carrying a brown canvas postbag across his shoulders. They were the more interested when they did observe him, because the white men had made a wide détour to avoid the dangers of just that crossing.

But Altouang had never seen ice before, and recked nothing of its dangers. It was three days since he had lost the track of the expedition, and since then he had steered by the peaks of Houanghari, and, making straight for his objective, had short-circuited Camps 1 and 2. He had abandoned his pony twenty miles back, where the terrain had become too obviously unsuited for ponies. For days in his postman's uniform he had sweated through the steamy forests, and now, moving across ice and against an icy wind, he was glad of its exotic swathings. Stumbling,

slipping, blundering past unrecognised enticements to destruction, he now made progress at the rate of about a mile an hour, the fear of Jat in his single-purposed heart. It was nearly noon when he reeled into Camp 3.

The wondering Bhutanese could by no means understand his language, but they fed him, and rubbed his ears and nose with snow, and afterwards with rancid butter; gave him strange potions and covered his swollen eyes with great goggles, his hands with hairy gloves, exterior decorations that completely spoilt the effect of his uniform. Then Altouang rested and, chewing betel-nut, recovered a determination worthy of a Postmaster-General.

It was some time before they understood his enquiries concerning the white men. When they did, they pointed up at the precipice, where four ant-like figures were engaged in negotiating the final excruciating overhang. Altouang groaned, and his spirit wavered. His cringing shoulders felt the touch of his postman's satchel, and at that he made obeisance to his gods and, rising, proceeded towards the face of the rock. The Bhutanese shrugged; the man was assuredly mad, some crazy devotee from the plains, where they produced strange manias. They had realised for some time that Jat demanded a sacrifice. Better this little yellow madman than another. They watched him with a serious but detached interest.

Altouang climbed like a monkey. After weeks of travel he was no longer fat, but monkey-hard and sinewy. The men in whose steps he climbed were big, and their cutting strained the reach of his short limbs. Still, he heaved himself up persistently, and on each step hung with a sublime fatalism.



A solitary, unroped climber in a postman's uniform . . . rose laboriously into view.

Everard and his party had unroped, rested, and reconnoitred the next stage, a good day's work. The snow had ceased, and the lifting clouds at times disclosed a blinding sunshine. The fresh, easy-seeming snow seemed to lure them upward to the bleakness of the ultimate crags. Already they were confident that the thing could be done, provided the weather held. At 18,000 feet they were breathing well, and still energetic. There was ample time to return to Camp 3, improving their cutting as they went. In the next few days they would establish Camp 4, far away at the limit of the snowy slopes.

It was while they were carefully roping up again that they heard a scrambling noise and a painful grunting from below. Before they could investigate, a solitary, unroped climber in a postman's uniform, and with nothing but worn sandals on his frost-bitten feet, rose laboriously into view and proceeded to scramble desperately away from the precipital edge. It was Altouang, of course, but Pup Foster insisted for

a time that it was the great god Jat himself, and persisted in elaborate obeisances. At the sight of them the little man staggered to his feet, but immediately sank on his belly in the snow again and was lamentably sick.

Perhaps it was as well he could not understand the things they said about him as they gathered round, for he was unaccustomed to the Western youth's self-conscious resort to violent understatement where an Oriental would strain his exaggerations. Once medicined and on his feet again he salaamed solemnly and, fumbling at his satchel, produced a letter—Evelyn's letter. "Krissmuß Post," he announced with gravity. They were the sole English words he knew, and he pronounced them without understanding, parrotwise, faithful to Amil's charge.

They had their work cut out to get the Postmaster-General safely back to Camp 3. Though securely roped between them now, he was useless in descent, limp with terror, but fortunately docile. Pup Foster's brother said afterwards they ought to have given him a letter for someone in Camp 3. Left to himself with a letter to deliver, he would assuredly have got there somehow.

On Boxing Day morning Everard's numb fingers pencilled a letter. There was not much of it, but what there was satisfied Evelyn, particularly the sentence which read: "If ever you so much as let Gore-Parsons touch you, I'll slay you both bloodily when I get back." He also wrote to Amil reminding him that it was the English custom to tip postmen on Boxing Day, but, as he hadn't enough cash on him, would Amil oblige with a loan until he got back—say, enough to buy a couple of really nice wives, of a quality worthy of a truly superlative Postmaster-General.

[THE END.]

TRUDA.—(Continued from Page 16.)

in awe of his almost uncanny faculty for detecting early symptoms. "Our greatest scientific diagnostician," someone had called him—and now, at the sound of a sentimental song, he had awakened to the knowledge that he had missed nearly all that mattered in life. "You're right," he told Kildare. "I need a holiday. When can you spare me?"

"When would you like to go?"

Warwick had meant to say "Next week," or "Over Christmas . . ." something vague. But suddenly he knew it must be *now*. The mere decision to go seemed to let something that had been trying to reach him, master him; a voice that called with urgency: "Come to Vienna, now, Ray! Come at once!" He left for Vienna next day.

He found Vienna different—yet eternally the same. A more prosperous and better nourished city than in the old days, yet an uneasy city, politically, and very prone to uniforms. . . . Still, on the surface, the same vivacious careless, tactfully gay Vienna. Its charm came back to him like an aroma of lost youth. He wandered the streets—the Kärntnerstrasse, the Graben—bright with Christmassy shop-windows, crisp with sun-flecked snow. He did not even worry about meeting Truda. He seemed to know in his heart it was inevitable. The strange, deep impulse that had brought him here seemed to permit no doubts.



"Typhoid—absurd!" the doctor shouted. "It is nothing but influenza. Are you telling me I am incapable of judging a case I have had under observation for weeks?"

Also, he knew his Vienna. If one walks in the Stefansplatz at the right hours, one is bound to meet all Vienna. So he met Truda again on his second day. He saw her dismiss a car by the cathedral, and walk to a bank. It was a great bank and a big car, while Truda herself was beautifully dressed. She had found her profiteer, it seemed. Watching her as she left the bank, he saw she had grown more lovely with maturity. Yet there were other things in her face. Strain about her mouth, fear leaping to her eyes as he spoke her name. Then she recognised him and in a flash her face was golden.

"Ray!" There was relief as well as pleasure in her voice. "I knew you'd come."

"Knew?"

"I've been needing you so," she said simply.

Even then he knew that love had nothing to do with her need. Knew it better as she hesitated over where they should go to talk. She did not want the world she now moved in to see. It was he who suggested that quiet little place of their first meeting in the Street of the Beautiful Lantern.

"Oh, Ray," she breathed as they sat facing each other. "It is good, so very good to see you again. I mean—even to look at you."

"So," he smiled, "there's something else too."

"Yes," she shivered, "but that is not nice, like seeing you. . . . I'm married, Ray."

Was that her trouble, he wondered? But she read his eyes.

"Happily, Ray, very, very happily."

To whom?"

"To Lex von Krem," she said, and laughed at his startled look. For Lex von Krem was one of the big figures the warring factions in Austria had produced—and proved. Of old family, yet of the new order,

he was one of those rare, idealistic yet practical politicians who devote a great fortune, honesty, and character to the rebuilding of their country.

"He wasn't a profiteer when I married him, Ray," Truda smiled. "He was not poor, but what he has become we have built together. He is a great gentleman, Ray, heart and mind. And I love him."

No doubt of that. It was shining in her eyes.

"And I have two babies," she went on. "A small Stefan and another Truda."

"And the old Stefan, and your other brothers and sisters?"

"Settled, well-married, happy—most of them. Lex has been so wonderful. Only the smallest, Ludwig, remains. . . . He is affianced. It is for Ludwig I fear, too, but mostly because of Lex."

"So, there is fear?"

"It is Lodling," she whispered, dread in her face.

He had guessed it was Lodling. Why hadn't he killed the brute on that dark landing when he had his chance?

Truda had forgotten the very existence of the man, and for years Lodling had made no sign—he had, as a matter of fact, been in prison for most of her married life, and had had no knowledge of what had

become of her. Then, some months back, he had seen her driving, had realised what she had become, what a rich prey she provided for a blackmailer, and had written to her.

There was no mistaking that letter. He had her in his power. He had every detail of her old companionship with Warwick so fixed in his mind that he could easily dig up evidence enough to create a scandal. Certainty of her innocence could not help Truda. Time, and the way Lodling presented facts, gave the thing the blackest look. And Lodling knew just how to get full value out of it. In the unstable, political world of Vienna, just a word loosed by Lodling would ruin Truda's husband through his connection with her. Her children would suffer, and Ludwig; her own happiness would be killed.

Truda had no hope of fighting such a beast; she had too many to protect. And she had no one to help her. Ray Warwick was the only one and she had lost his address. Yet her heart, her very soul, had sent out a cry to him to come to her aid.

"And it seems I heard it," he smiled. He wondered whether he had. Most unscientific, of course, yet why had that strange fret come to him?

Well, anyhow, he had no doubts as to what he had to do. He loved her still. This ugly situation had arisen through him. He must tackle Lodling . . . kill him, perhaps. There did not seem any other sure way to deal with a blackmailer—and, anyhow, his was not the type of love that flinched.

"You've been paying the cur money?" he asked.

"Yes, many times. But he asks more and more." She showed him notes she had just drawn from her bank. "I must pay him these. It has drained me. Lex is generous, but soon even he must learn that I am spending too much. It is a terror."

"How do you pay him?"

"Generally I meet him in one of the parks, but this time it is different. He says he is ill, and I must go to his flat."

"I will see him," Warwick said grimly. He shut the notes back in her purse. "You have nothing more to fear, Truda."

"I knew everything would be right once you came, Ray," she said, with her old-childlike simplicity.

(Continued on page 49.)

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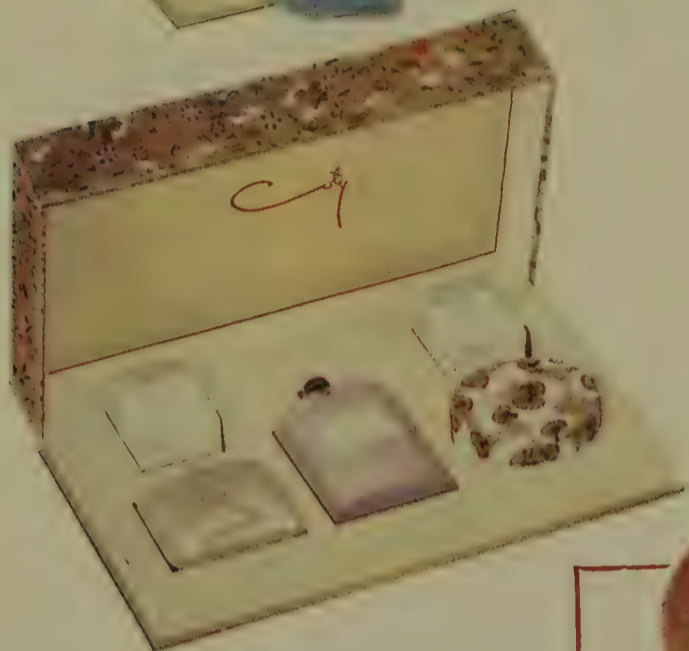
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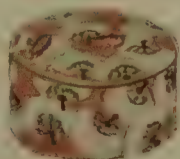
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TRUDA — (Continued from Page 46.)

Well, it would be. Warwick was resolved on that; everything right for her, whatever it meant for him. He went out to the vast white block of suburban flats where Lodling lived in luxury on his blood-money. He was just in time, he felt. Lodling had attempted to trick Truda into visiting his flat the better to compromise her. Lodling was going to get a shock.

But Lodling, it seemed, had really been ill. Warwick found him still in bed; a sickly, flaccid, more degenerate figure than of old. He had a slatternly woman cooking the rich foods of Vienna for him, because, it seemed, he was just convalescing. Lodling cringed at the sight of him, but he was brazen under his fear. He knew how strong his power was. Not even the cold fury he saw in Warwick's eyes could do anything effective—especially as he had a woman witness and a telephone handy.

"So you really are ill?" Warwick said, the doctor in him interested in spite of his disgust.

"It was but the influenza," the man leered. "It is over. Once I have got some real food into me, I shall soon be out and about—and as busy as ever."

No mistaking his meaning, yet Warwick missed it. The doctor in him was more interested in the brightness of Lodling's eyes, in the condition of Lodling's skin.

"Still running a temperature, though," he said. He looked at the chart above Lodling's head. He saw that the man's temperature had persisted at 102 for nearly a week.

"What of it?" Lodling's tone was suspicious. "My doctor says it is often like that. And no wonder. I've had no solid food in me for weeks." His glutton's lips writhed at the mention of food. He called: "Schani, when are you going to bring that tray?"

The woman brought food enough to sicken a healthy man—food enough to kill Lodling if he ate it. For that instinct which had made him a master in diagnoses told Warwick that that glutton's pile of food must mean that—death for Lodling. He knew Lodling was suffering from Typhoid Fever.

That Lodling's doctor had not diagnosed it was not surprising.

In its early stages the deadly thing is hard to read. Many of its victims go for days experiencing nothing more

than the high temperature Lodling was showing, with no other symptoms or even a sense of discomfort. Most doctors can be excused for not detecting it early—but Ray Warwick was not an ordinary doctor. He had made it his life's work to see the symptoms of such dangers before other doctors saw them. He had developed an almost uncanny faculty for recognising them. He recognised them at once in Lodling. He knew that if a creature of Lodling's unhealthy physique was not taken in hand immediately he'd have little hope of living. He knew, above all, from the peculiar nature of the fever, that if Lodling took that rich, irritating food into his stomach and intestines he'd slay himself as effectively as if he took crude poison.

Lodling would eat—and die. And that was what he, Warwick, wanted. That was the best and, in fact, the only way to save Truda. He had but to keep his knowledge to himself and Lodling would settle their problem himself. He stared down at the blackmailer, read the smirk of triumph on his face; knew that the brute was sure that nothing he could do could break his filthy power over Truda. A rat, thoroughly deserving of death. Lodling with a snigger stretched his hand for a crusty Viennese roll.

"Don't touch that," Warwick's voice came level and sharp. "If you eat that you kill yourself."

It was absurd. He'd been ready to kill Lodling with his bare hands . . . but when it came to disease, no; the doctor in him had to save, not kill. He saw Lodling glaring up at him, surprise and low suspicion in his face—he only had to let that vile mind have its way and the job was done for them. He saw Truda's eyes, the fear in them. Could he put this beast before Truda?

He hesitated, as, snarling defiance, Lodling broke the roll. Truda or Lodling—surely a man, a man who loved her, had only one choice? . . . Yet, as the crust reached

Lodling's mouth, his hand shot out instinctively and tore it away. It wasn't Truda or Lodling, but something higher that commanded him . . . the very instinct that had made him a doctor, a healer of men, was in control.

With twisted lips, with a mind sick for Truda, he lifted the tray to a near table, called the woman, bade her take it away. "If he eats he kills himself," he told her firmly.

Suspicion in Lodling reinforced the glutton. He swore foully. He wanted to know what Warwick's game was. His twisted mind saw some clever trick for his undoing, even for his death, in Warwick's actions. Warwick said evenly: "You forget I am a doctor, Lodling. I speak as one. You have a fever. It will be dangerous to eat."

"You lie," Lodling roared. "My doctor says I may eat. There is some trap behind this."

"You have Typhoid Fever," Warwick said. "You must be removed to hospital at once, if you are to get well."

"Ah!" Lodling was sure he saw the trap now. "So that is it? I am to be taken to hospital . . . where you have many friends. I see it. . . . I shall be your patient. Whatever you say I have will be believed. . . . You can do anything with me . . . operate . . . and, if I die under the operation . . . who will blame the clever English doctor?"

[Continued overleaf.]



He stared into her frightened eyes, saw she knew him as well as he knew himself—batter. He said huskily: "I will go to the authorities now. You know I—have to."

Warwick stared at him, amazed at the warped evil of his mind. Again he thought of Truda. The man was determined to kill himself, shouldn't he let him . . . ? One part of him, the lover, said yes—only there was no fighting against that higher part in him.

"You can be treated by your own doctor," he began.

"My own doctor. Ha! you will see," Lodling shouted. "Schani, to the telephone. Call the Hausarzt Stachel. Tell him there is a man here, an English doctor, who says his treatment is all wrong, who wants to drag me off to hospital. . . . Tell him to come and stop it."

Warwick let him rave, let the woman repeat the outrageous message. The doctor, when he came, would see the truth, would help him save Lodling in spite of himself. He had reckoned without the Hausarzt Stachel. The doctor was of the most pompous and stiff-necked German type; a fool armoured with self-opinion, mulish with ignorance. He was already mortally offended that his treatment had been questioned. He arrived more concerned with this breach of medical etiquette than with Lodling's condition. The thing was an outrage, unheard of. He would report it to the authorities.

"As long as you also report to the authorities that your patient is suffering from typhoid, that is all I care," Warwick said.

"Typhoid—absurd!" the doctor shouted. "It is nothing but influenza. Are you telling me I am incapable of judging a case I have had under observation for weeks? You who have only seen the man once?"

It was absurd, he had to fight both the doctor and Lodling for Lodling's life. And the doctor, egged on by Lodling, was incapable of sense. He was far too angry to listen to reason; too ignorant to realise Warwick's standing in medicine. Obstinate he set his silly pride against any argument. Lodling was his patient. He, alone, accepted full responsibility for Lodling.

They wrangled so long that Warwick had barely time to reach the little café where he had agreed to meet Truda at six. She listened palely still to all he told. She said in a husky whisper as he finished:

"So—Lodling is likely to die?"

"Lodling *will* die," he said deliberately. "Unless I save him."

"Unless you save him," there was a queer look, fright and hope mingled, in her eyes. "You think he can live?"

"A chance," he said. "A good chance. I can go straight from here to the authorities; they know of me, anyhow. They will act.

They will have him in hospital at once. And with good treatment he'll—he can live."

Warwick looked steadily at her. He had broken his journey between Lodling and the authorities to put the thing before her. Lodling's and the doctor's obstinacy seemed to have given him the right. He had been true to his calling, fought for Lodling; now, if she decided. . . .

"And if Lodling dies, our troubles—" she began, whispering, and stopped. He could tell by the light that waxed in her face that she was seeing the threat to herself, her husband, to Ludwig and her babies wiped out. Her hand came across the table to catch his. But she checked. She was looking into his eyes.

"And you will go to the authorities, Ray?" she said.

He stared into her frightened eyes, saw she knew him as well as he knew himself—better. He said huskily: "I will go to the authorities now. You know I—have to."

She only sighed and despair deepened in her eyes. She knew he had to. She knew he loved her, but she knew there were higher things in him than love. He left her and taxi-ed to the responsible bureau. He knew he had betrayed her in not betraying his calling, and he felt it like a man sentenced to death. For his name carried weight. The matter was put in hand at once; Lodling was rushed to hospital.

Ray Warwick told Truda about it in two days time. Lodling had been carried to hospital to save his life, and, to damn her. Yet Lodling had died. Lodling had, in fact, killed himself. Lodling had eaten the food Schani had prepared. Gorged himself. Crammed the lot into himself because he feared Warwick; felt that Warwick would get him willy-nilly to hospital and he would never enjoy that glutton's meal unless he ate it at once. And guzzling it had been the thing that slew him . . . his rotten carcase, his rotten heart could not stand up to it.

Truda was saved, but accidentally.

"I did nothing, my dear, but let you down," Warwick told her. "I loved you—and let you down."

"You loved me and remained worthy as a great lover," she smiled. "You remained Ray as I knew him. You wouldn't have been big enough to want to save me if you hadn't been big enough to want to save even Lodling. . . . It was that higher thing in you that made you my good friend. I am glad you came back to Vienna, Ray."

THE END.



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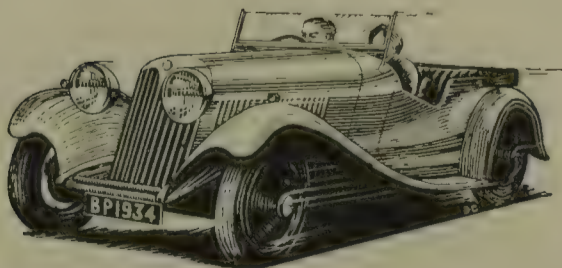
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THE THREE ESCAPES OF DELPHINE DE CUSTINE.

(Continued from Page 51)

At last, at three o'clock on a morning in October, she was woken by the voices of drunken men, calling on her to unbolt her door and come with them. When she refused to do so they roared with laughter, and said: "Very well, then, we will come back in the morning for you." It turned out that a company of young Revolutionaries, after drinking in a cabaret, had adjourned in a body to the office of Legendre, a butcher, whose duty it was to receive petitions from prisoners' friends. While they had been roistering in his office, a paper had floated down from a shelf. One of them had picked it up, and while they were waiting for a light to be brought, so that they could read whose name was upon it, they had sworn an oath that, whoever the prisoner was, they would go and effect a rescue. When they had discovered that it bore the name of the beautiful Mme. de Custine—"la Belle Custine"—what luck!—they had decided to go off together and get her out at once. Legendre, too tipsy to know what he was about, had signed the order for release, which they had immediately made out on their own authority. Fortunately for Delphine, he had issued no counter-order before the men came for her again, cold sober now, at ten o'clock the same morning.

So "la Belle Custine" returned to her flat, and found Nanette still living in its kitchen, having made up two little beds there. This peasant woman could easily have left Paris months ago, but she had been busying herself getting fifty of the workmen from the old factory at Nidervillers (at which her father had once been employed) to sign a petition on behalf of their mistress. This was the very paper that had fluttered from the shelf in Legendre's office. If all her efforts had been useless, and Delphine had been executed, Nanette had decided to take the little heir secretly back to his own estate and bring him up as her child until better times came. But until she had certain news of his mother's death, she was staying in the kitchen. Little Astolphe had been very ill, "deaf and almost imbecile" he describes the condition in which his mother found him; yet he grew to be a man, and it is from his pen that we know the strange tale of the escapes of Delphine de Custine.

It is not remarkable that, after her release, Delphine fell ill at last. For five months she was unable to leave the flat, where Nanette nursed both her and the sick baby with unaltered devotion. As soon as they could they went into the country, to a small estate of the de Custine family that did not happen to have been confiscated; and not until then did Delphine know her debt to Gérôme, the rough master-mason. One day the faithful peasant nurse asked her, what did Madame think that she had lived upon since she had left Paris? Really, Delphine had no idea. She had always been accustomed to have money. She supposed, now that she came to think of it, that Nanette must have been selling

some of the silver. Nanette said grimly that the revolutionaries had taken all that on the night of Madame's arrest. "Linen or jewels, then?" suggested Delphine vaguely. She knew that she possessed some marvellous jewellery. Nanette told her that she did not; not now.

The charming widow was then made aware that for months past she had been living upon the charity of Gérôme, that horrible-looking man who had always been so rude to her. His party was out of power now, and he had been obliged to secrete himself, but from his hiding-place, every week, he had been sending Nanette money, with orders that beautiful Madame was to know nothing of it. Nanette thought that now Delphine was safely back on her own estate, she ought to pay back the fellow. Nanette, like a good Frenchwoman, had kept a little account of everything. Delphine might be vague, but she was not ungrateful. She helped Gérôme to fly to America.

Some years later, when Josephine de Beauharnais was wife of the First Consul (after all, she was to be Empress of a new France!), Delphine de Custine drove out to Mme. Bonaparte's delightful country house at Malmaison to ask her old fellow-prisoner a favour. Mme. Bonaparte's husband was all-powerful, and Delphine's mother was still a proscribed *émigrée*, an exile in Poland now. Josephine, who was always generous, petitioned her second husband successfully on behalf of the fascinating widow who had been General de Beauharnais's last thought as he was called to the scaffold.

So Delphine's mother returned to Paris after nine years' absence, but the reunited family did not set up house in their old home. Close to the end of its garden lay the Place de la Révolution, now renamed the Place de la Concorde, where the guillotine had once stood, and where Armand de Custine had suffered. The house was occupied now by a General de Beurnonville, who was very anxious that Delphine should be its mistress. Mme. de Sabran had remarried; why should not her daughter? But he got a refusal.

Amongst those who came back to France about this time was Gérôme. Delphine's mother would have liked to welcome the man who had saved her daughter's life into her own circle; she wanted to introduce him to all their friends. Delphine herself pressed him to visit them more often.

But the coarse-featured man said, staring at the dainty widow pleading with him: "I was not born like you. I don't talk like you. I have not had the same education. If I did anything for you, you did as much for me; so we are quits. The madness of the times brought us together for a moment, and we shall always be able to count on each other. . . . But we shall never understand one another. . . ."

[Note:—"THE THREE ESCAPES OF DELPHINE DE CUSTINE" is historically correct.]



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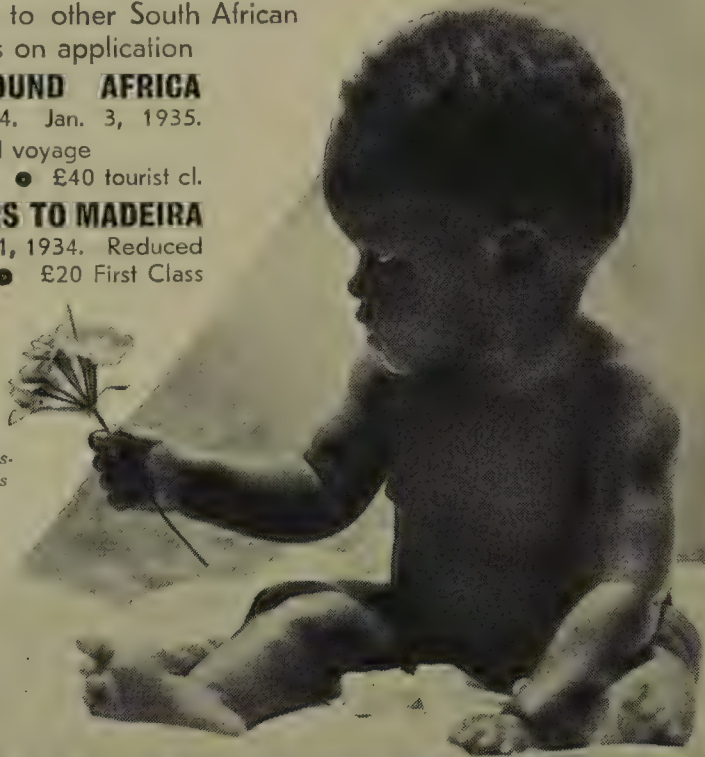
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CHRISTMAS ON ROBINSON CRUSOE'S ISLAND.

By C. E. R. ALFORD.

EVERY year the pantomime "Robinson Crusoe" is produced at one or the other theatre somewhere in Great Britain. But suppose, instead of going to a pantomime, that you found yourself actually spending Christmas on Robinson Crusoe's Island? Tobago, British West Indies, has a very sound claim to that distinctive appellation. Transport yourself on the wings of fancy to a small village called Speyside-on-Sea in this tropical island, where the temperature at Christmas-time is around 80 deg. F.

Here is no pantomime scene of canvas and paint. Before you are the glistening waters of a beautiful bay, bathed in bright sunlight, along the shores of which stately palms nod their heads dreamily. In the mouth of the bay, three little islands, steep, jagged, and clothed in green scrub, thrust themselves sheer out of the water like the humps of some gigantic sea-monster. On the centre island, clinging unbelievably to the rocks, is a dainty, red-roofed bungalow—a fairy house, with the white surf breaking against the coral reef at its feet.

Beyond this little group is a larger, star-shaped island, Little Tobago, rising abruptly from the waters to a height of five hundred feet, thickly wooded from summit to shore, and the protected home of Birds of Paradise. A white sail shows up clearly against the blue-green of the waters as a fishing-boat beats its way homeward from man's oldest labour. A silver streak suddenly glides gracefully through the air, to plunge once more beneath the surface, as a Spanish mackerel leaps from the depths. A turtle bobs his head above the wavelets, his back showing clearly for a

second as he dives again. Looking down on this scene in solemn majesty is Pigeon Peak, 1800 ft. high, towering steeply behind the bay. This is our Christmas setting.

A month before the day arrives, the great question of stores comes to the fore. We know that our little coastal steamer will come fussing into the bay a week before Christmas. Our list must be in the hands of our grocer in Port of Spain, Trinidad, a week before that. Therefore, the drawing up of this list is a most important and exciting business. Once the list has gone, we cannot add to it. If anything is forgotten; then we shall have to do without.

A solemn conclave is held. For once the mere male is called into consultation, and he speaks weighty words of wisdom with regard to how many boxes of crackers we shall have; whether we shall choose those with paper caps inside them, or whistles, or both. Usually "both" has it. We "put them on the list, before they can be missed." In excited anticipation, we add item after item until it appears to be finished. Of course, it never is. Right up to the last minute things get added, until finally the mail carrier arrives and—the list departs!

We count the days to the arrival of the coastal steamer. When it dawns we are like children, continually glancing at the Point round which she will appear. We have sudden qualms about whether or not we really did order everything, or whether, perhaps, the boxes have got left behind or been mysteriously stolen.

"Here she is!" We gaze seaward in true Robinson Crusoe style, shading our eyes from the glare. The little ship comes sliding into the bay, the white water curling up around her bows. She heads inshore, and at last we hear the rattle of her cable. Two white puffs shoot into the air from the fore side of her funnel, followed by the two blasts from

[Continued overleaf.]

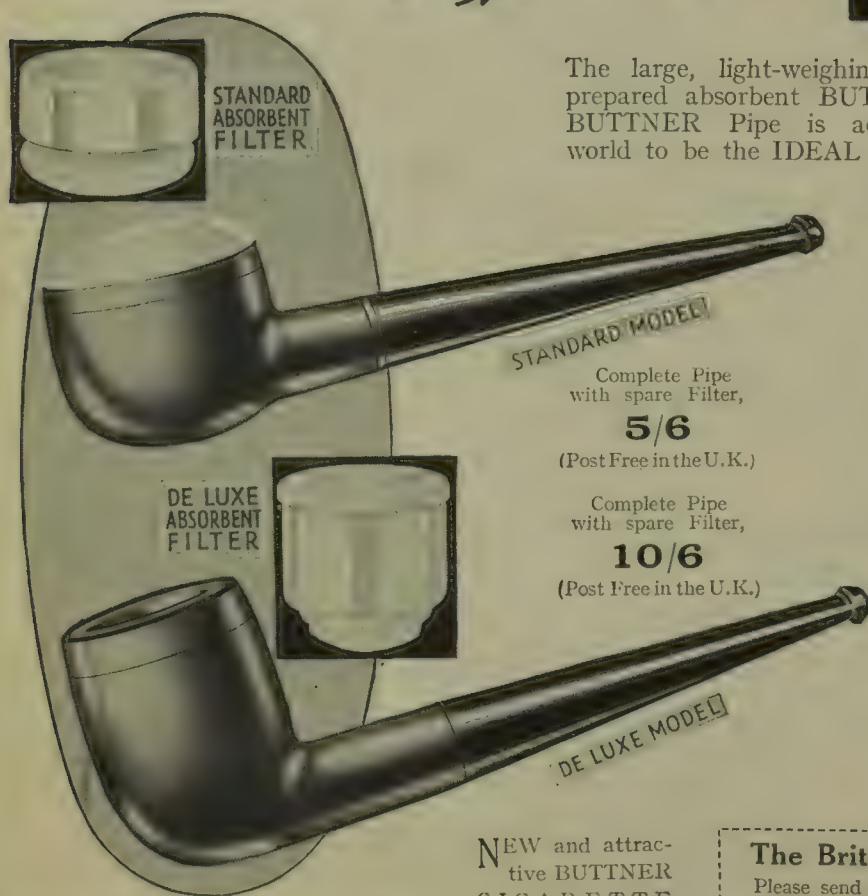
ROBINSON CRUSOE'S ISLAND AT CHRISTMAS-TIME—IN REAL LIFE; NOT IN PANTOMIME! HOUSES IN THE VILLAGE OF SPEYSIDE-ON-SEA, ON TOBAGO (WHICH HAS GOOD CLAIMS TO BE THE SPOT DEFOE HAD IN MIND)—THE SCENE OF THE CHRISTMAS DESCRIBED IN OUR ARTICLE.

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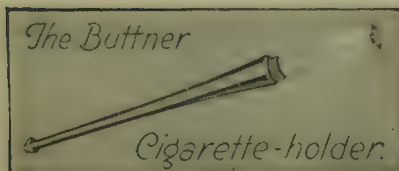
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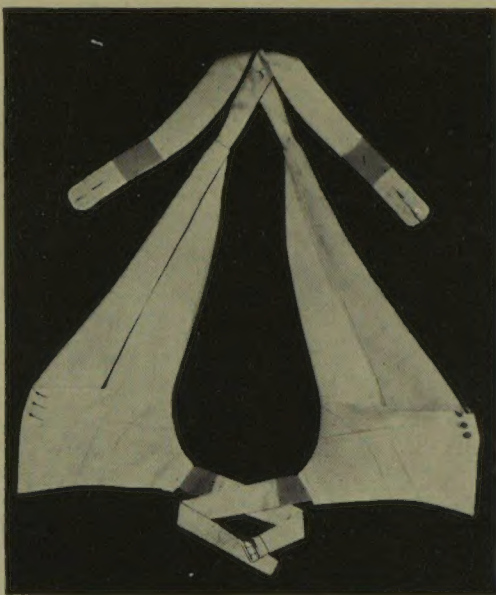
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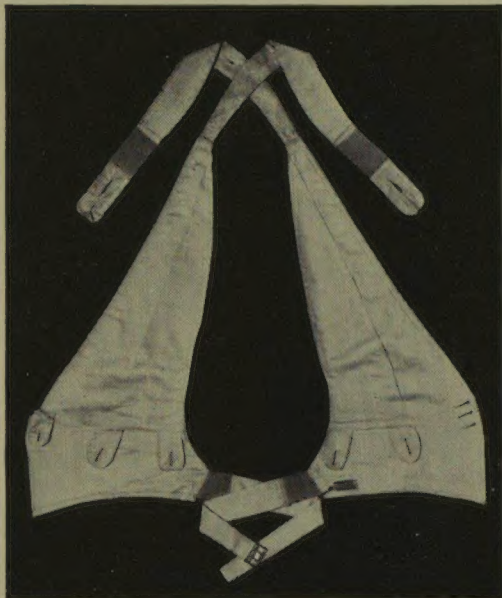
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her syren announcing her arrival. Then a white-clothed figure comes to the end of the bridge and waves. We wave back furiously to our friend, the Captain, and watch with impatience as the surf-boats are lowered to bring the stores ashore.

Our old fears revive. Suppose the boxes have not arrived! Suppose . . . but, of course, they do arrive, perfectly safe and sound, as usual. We fling ourselves upon them, like schoolboys round a tuck-box, and rip them open. Eagerly we produce the contents, bestrewing the floor with paper packing and straw, until the whole place looks like a warehouse. Everything has come. Nothing has been forgotten. We stow it all away carefully and await the Day.

On Christmas Eve we decorate. In the middle of the festooning, a frantic appeal comes from a neighbour, begging us to let him have some rum, as disaster has overtaken three of his bottles. We comply gladly, for our stock is ample, and entreat him to swop it for some bacon which the cat, with mean cunning, has scolloped that very morning.

Christmas Day dawns. Down to the sea in the morning, with the sun rising over the outer islands in all his glory. The waters, warm as always, entice us to plunge into their translucent depths, and caress us with soft, soothing embrace. Back to a cold shower and into clean togs, tennis-shirt and trousers; for no cumbersome clothing is required here.

In the evening we watch the native girls and boys parading up and down the road. Ordinarily they go bare-footed. To-day, as on all special occasions, the girls have crammed their poor toes into high-heeled shoes of the latest pattern. Their long-skirted dresses are of silks and satins, and they walk awkwardly, but proudly, beside their boys. Eve is much

the same in any part of the world! The sun sinks behind Pigeon Peak, bathing the bay and the islands in quickly changing tints of red and pink and rose. Cocktails are swizzled and swallowed, as we sit on the gallery listening to the never-ceasing music of the surf.

In a few minutes the short twilight of the Tropics is gone. The stars leap to view with startling brilliance, and a fairyland of fireflies appears, entrancing and mysterious. A light twinkles in the little bungalow across the bay; then steadies like a distant beacon. We flash our greetings by torch, and are answered at once. Then to the festive board.

Turtle soup, fresh and real. Crab - in - the - back, caught close to the bungalow. Kingfish, lying whole and colourful on a huge dish. Turkey, reared in Tobago. Out with the lights, and the rum-soaked plum pudding enters flaming ruddily, with a sea of fiery spirit swirling round its base. Then fruit, fresh from the trees, the whole washed down with plentiful rum.

Crackers are seized and pulled, and caps appear, set jauntily on heads that have become young again. Later in the night we saunter down to the beach. There, in the soft moonlight, we watch the surf

breaking gently at our feet, as we sit lazily in warmth and comfort. The tall palms sway sleepily, and thousands of fireflies, reminding us of Tinker Bell, dart in and out among the foliage behind us. Fairyland indeed: not on the stage at a pantomime: but real and alive and marvellous.

With reference to those coloured reproductions in this issue which are from Mr. Walt Disney's new film, "The Night Before Christmas," our readers will be interested to know that Messrs. Wm. Collins Sons & Co. are now issuing the book, "The Night Before Christmas."



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